



# NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project

Making an invisible history visible

[www.nyclgbtsites.org](http://www.nyclgbtsites.org)

July 29, 2022

**Re: Letter of Support for 143 East State Street, Ithaca, New York**

To the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission:

The New York City LGBT Historic Sites Project strongly supports the nomination of 143 East State Street in Ithaca, New York, as an individual local landmark. In particular, we note the significance of Firebrand Books, which operated on the second floor here from 1984 to 2000 as a small lesbian, feminist, and anti-racist press.

Launched in 2015 by preservation professionals, the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project is an award-winning cultural heritage initiative and educational resource documenting LGBT place-based history in New York City. The Project has documented over 400 sites from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to 2000 that are important to LGBT history and illustrate the community's influence on New York City and American culture. This has led to the recognition of ten LGBT sites on the National Register of Historic Places.

We are also committed to supporting colleagues who are working towards historic landmark designations for LGBT properties outside of New York City, illustrating that LGBT people and history exist in "less expected" places. Firebrand Books, in Ithaca, was run by Nancy K. Bereano, a queer activist who was involved with the women's liberation and gay liberation movements. In the 1960s, she moved to Ithaca from New York City. Her ties to the latter city continued through her press business; for one, the well-known lesbian feminist poet Adrienne Rich, active in NYC's lesbian community, provided early financial support for Firebrand Books. Bereano also published the work of emerging lesbian feminist authors, such as Rich's partner Michelle Cliff, whose Staten Island home is documented on our website. Other historic sites on our website with connections to Firebrand include the Audre Lorde Residence, on Staten Island; the Lesbian Herstory Archives, in Brooklyn; and the Joan Nestle Residence, Womanbooks, Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop, The Duchess, and the Women's Liberation Center, in Manhattan.

We ask that you approve this nomination, which will officially protect a significant site connected to Ithaca's LGBT history.

Sincerely,

Amanda Davis, Project Manager

Andrew S. Dolkart, Ken Lustbader, and Jay Shockley, Co-Directors