



December 8, 2023

Chair Commissioner Sarah Carroll and Commissioners  
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre St., 9th Fl.  
New York, NY 10007

Subject: LPC-21-03229, 27 East 4th Street - NoHo Historic District Extension and the Adjacent Merchant's House Museum

Dear Chair Carroll and Commissioners:

We write regarding the above referenced application for a certificate of appropriateness to demolish a garage and repair shop at 27 East 4th Street, in Manhattan, in the NoHo Historic District Extension, and the adjacent Merchant's House Museum at 29 East 4th Street.

We write to express our strong, unwavering support for preserving and saving the Merchant's House Museum, and we urge you to ensure the museum is protected through appropriate oversight of this application and any others that might permit nearby construction, and with financial and technical support. As you know, Merchant's House is an almost 200-year-old residence whose foundation and structure are extremely delicate and vulnerable to damage, and even collapse. We must ensure that this public building—owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and recognized as a historic landmark by local, state, and national historic preservation and landmark bodies—will be protected and preserved.

The Merchant's House is designated both an interior and exterior landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission and as a National Historic Landmark, and has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Two nationally recognized preservation and structural engineering firms have conducted studies of the Merchant's House and identified areas of risk to both the interior and exterior as well as significant structural damage in the case of nearby construction. The interior walls are made of plaster that is subject to cracking if disrupted or not properly maintained. The Merchant's House also has a rubble foundation consisting of soil, silt, and clay typical of the period's construction, and much more susceptible to disruption than today's concrete foundations. Both of these historically significant factors leave the building vulnerable to damage, even collapse, and must be considered during the evaluation of the

application submitted for 27 East 4th Street or any applications that would permit nearby construction.

It is our understanding that LPC has hired a consulting engineer to review reports on the stability of the Merchant's House that have been provided by the Applicant and representatives from the Museum. The engineer's findings will be discussed orally at a public meeting on Tuesday, December 12. The engineer has not yet issued a written report, and this meeting format will not allow for the Merchant's House to provide comment. In order to maintain a publically transparent process, we request this meeting be postponed until the engineer's report can be provided in writing and the Merchant's House can have a minimum of two weeks to review it. We also request the meeting be changed to a hearing that allows the Merchant's House the opportunity to respond directly to the Commission.

We urge you to keep in mind the specific vulnerabilities of the Merchant's House and its unique position as an interior and exterior landmark and active museum contributing to our present and future cultural environment when evaluating applications, and provide the Merchant's House with all of the necessary opportunities and resources to protect and preserve this historic treasure.

Sincerely,



Brian Kavanagh  
New York State Senator  
Senate District 27



Carlina Rivera  
NYC Council Member  
Council District 2



Deborah J. Glick  
New York State Assembly Member  
Assembly District 66



Dan Goldman  
United States Representative  
Congressional District 10