

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

January 13, 2009

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C.
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED
DESIGNATION OF LAMARTINE PLACE, MANHATTAN, AS A HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Good afternoon Chair Tierney and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The Conservancy is pleased to support designation of the Lamartine Place historic district. At first view, this appears to be a pleasant group of buildings, with an attractive mix of styles and details typical of the 19th century. Upon further review of course, the history that took place on this block creates a most vivid sense of place.

Due to its inherently secretive nature, the history of the Underground Railroad has been difficult to document. In this case, the documentation is clear. Not only did these buildings serve as a pivotal location in abolitionist history, but as a site of the Civil War Draft Riots. These buildings, slightly changed in their decoration, but with the same structures, in the same location, remind us of the brave history of their occupants and visitors.

And, like so many other buildings in the City, this block has faced severe development pressures, leading to the halted alterations at No. 339. With designation, Lamartine Place will receive the protection of the Landmarks Law and review and guidance of any future proposed changes to the historic fabric. We applaud the actions of concerned neighbors who energized the cause of designating this block, and of the Landmarks Commission for moving with speed to bring forth this hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.