Valerie S. Mason
Chair

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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 24, 2026

Angie Master, Acting Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

RE: 159-161 East 78th Street (Individual Landmark) – A Vernacular style building with Italianate influences designed by Henry Armstrong and constructed in 1861. Application is to request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission issue a favorable report to the City Planning Commission regarding the continuing maintenance program for the landmarks in connection with a transfer of development rights pursuant to Section 75-42 of the Zoning Resolution.

Dear Acting Chair Master,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 22, 2026, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 30 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS 159 and 161 East 78th Street sit on the north side of 78th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues and were designated Individual Landmarks in 1968 (LP- 0422 and LP-0423, respectively); and

WHEREAS the three-story buildings were built for the painter John Turner in 1861 as part of a row of 11 houses on the block built by Henry Armstrong; and

WHEREAS the houses retained their charm through a number of renovations and are now single-family residences with different owners; and

WHEREAS under Section 75-42 of the Zoning Resolution as part of the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity the owners have entered into a transfer of development rights (4,000 SF for each building) with the developers of a nearby proposed development at the southeast corner of 79th Street and Lexington Avenue; and

WHEREAS the transfer of development rights will preserve the existing floor area of the two houses and preclude any additions to them; and

WHEREAS to that end, the applicants propose to designate 20% of the consideration for the transfer to a restoration program and an additional 10% to continued maintenance; and

WHEREAS the proposed restoration scope for both buildings will include selective brick replacement where brick is either cracked or spalled, brick patching at areas where embeds have been removed, removing any existing paint from brick surfaces, removing incompatible mortar and re-pointing where required, patching brownstone trim where necessary, repainting missing or flaking paint at brownstone trim; and

WHEREAS additionally, for 159 East 78th Street, the proposed restoration scope will also include front facade window replacement to match the historic wood windows in material, configuration, operation, and details; and

WHEREAS a periodic inspection shall occur every ten years and will include all portions of the existing building envelope as well as inspecting for structural integrity; and

WHEREAS the Committee commended the applicants for their clear and concise presentation and noted the benefit of a thorough restoration and continued maintenance program to the buildings and the general public; and

WHEREAS although the Transfer of Development Rights does not sit within the formal purview of the Committee, several committee members pointed out the difficulty in weighing the transfer against the potential development to which the rights are to be transferred absent any information concerning the nature and potential appearance of the receiving project, prompting votes against the application; and

WHEREAS nonetheless, several committee members noted that the visual improvements and the preclusion of any rooftop or rear yard additions to the applicant's properties outweighed the unknown quality of the receiving development; and

WHEREAS the Transfer of Development Rights is an as-of-right action taken under the Zoning Resolution;

THEREFORE be it resolved that this application is **APPROVED** as presented.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Anthony Cohn, David Helpern, and Jane Parshall*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Anthony Cohn, David Helpern, and Jane Parshall
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York State
Honorable Zohran Mamdani, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member, 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member, 76th Assembly District
Honorable Julie Menin, Speaker, NYC Council, 5th Council District
Honorable Virginia Maloney, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Elsie Encarnacion, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District