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Hon. Robert B. Tierney
Chairman
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

RE: Mason Garage, former Dakota Stable, at 348-354 Amsterdam Avenue
Berkeley Garage, former New York Cab Company, at 318-324 Amsterdam Avenue

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write to urge you to take immediate action to preserve two of the Upper West Side's most distinguished, unprotected landmarks: the former Dakota Stable at 348-354 Amsterdam Avenue (77th Street) and the former New York Cab Company stable at 318-324 Amsterdam Avenue (75th Street). Because of their great historical and architectural significance, both buildings have been on the radar screen of preservationists and neighborhood residents for many years. Now, the Dakota Stable appears to be imminently threatened with demolition. It would be a terrible shame to lose this outstanding example of an increasingly rare building type, the large-scale commercial stable.

New York is famous for its architectural variety and the layers of history revealed on every street corner. The corners of 75th and 77th Street along Amsterdam are unique reminders of a time when the avenue served as the major horse-car route linking the Upper West Side, which was just beginning to develop, to the business district in lower Manhattan. Architect Bradford Lee Gilbert designed the Dakota Stable in the 1890s, soon after his Tower Building was completed at 50 Broadway. In a 1987 "Streetscapes" column in the *New York Times*, Christopher Gray acknowledged the Tower Building (now demolished) as one of the most important skyscrapers in New York City's history. Similarly, Gray praises the architecture and rich materials of the Dakota Stable, which mirrors the Tower Building in its Romanesque Revival style and minimal ornamentation. He writes, "...the building is a work of color and line rather than applied ornament, in contrast to most buildings of the period, which were often overloaded with decoration."

The former New York Cab Company stable, a block to the south of the Dakota Stable, is a striking companion reinforcing the history and identity of this area, once called "stable row." Designed by C. Abbott French and built in 1889, it is also a strong example of the Romanesque Revival style, with grand arches cited in the *AIA Guide to New York City*. One need only look around our city to realize that these solid, 19th-century, round-arched buildings are few and far between. Here we are lucky enough to have two examples intact and evidently profitably used (both of these buildings are public parking garages that do a brisk business).

Please calendar public hearings for these two important buildings as soon as possible. I stand at the ready to provide the Commission with whatever support would be helpful to move these designations forward.

Sincerely,

Tom Duane

Thomas K. Duane
New York State Senator
29th District