



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

832 East 11th Street New York NY 10003
tel (212) 614-9207 fax (212) 614-9227 email hdc@hdc.org

June 21, 2006

Hon. Robert B. Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street
New York City, New York 10007

Dear Commissioner Tierney:

The Historic Districts Council requests that the Landmarks Preservation Commission consider the Dakota Garage and the Berkley Garage located on Amsterdam Avenue at 77th and 75th Streets, respectively, for designation as individual New York City landmarks.

Both buildings are interesting, behind-the-scenes reminders of life on the West Side at the turn of the last century. "Stable row", as the stretch between 75th and 77th Streets is sometimes known, contains a dozen or so public and private garages. They are companion pieces to the nearby brownstones whose residents rented the horses and carriages from such commercial stables and serve as visible guideposts to how New Yorkers of the day lived. Presently, the only garages land marked in the city are a string along East 73rd Street.

The Dakota Garage was constructed in two sections from 1891 to 1894. It was known originally as the Mason Stable, later renamed the Dakota Stable in 1912, the Dakota Garage when it was refitted to store cars rather than carriages and horses in 1915, and later the Pyramid for its stepped entryways. The building is an architectural gem designed by Bradford Gilbert in a medieval style. Interestingly, it has been noted that much of the garage's decorative detailing, including round arches on top of a multistory arcade and the striking two colors of brick, were used by Gilbert in his Tower Building. This building, while considered one of the most important skyscrapers in New York City history, was torn down in 1914.

In a similar style and predating the Dakota Garage is the nearby Berkely Garage. Formerly known as the New York Cab Company, this garage was designed by C. Abbott French and built in 1889. The building is noted in the *AIA Guide to New York City* for its three large Romanesque Revival arches.

While the owners of the Dakota Stables claim the site will remain a garage for the next decade, there is a demolition clause in the garage operator's lease. Both buildings' futures are also fragile as this is not a residential area and there are few neighbors who would object to their demolition and redevelopment as high rises. This lack of immediately affected community, however, does not lessen these buildings' architectural or historical significance.

We respectfully ask that a designation hearing be held for these highly significant and endangered buildings.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.