



December 7, 2020

Sarah Carroll
Chair and Commissioner
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Carroll:

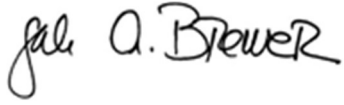
We write to express our support for the Request for Evaluation (RFE) application submitted by the Upper Riverside Residents Alliance for the site at 857 Riverside Drive, New York, NY. This site, named the Harris-Newhouse Home, has a rich history and important connection to the abolitionists movement and should be preserved. We understand that the RFE for this project was rejected by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), however we want to go on record outlining the critical importance of preserving this house.

Situated just northwest of Riverside Drive and 158th Street, the Harris-Newhouse Home is a splendid example of traditional Greek Revival-Italianate architecture characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century. Prominent features of the original house remain, including the side porch and rear porch of the building as well as the original clapboard cladding. The two-story wood-frame building was built in 1851 and was originally owned by two abolitionists, Dennis Harris and John Newhouse. Mr. Harris was an active participant in the Underground Railroad. There is no telling who may have passed through this house in the 16-year period that the Harris' and Newhouse's were in residence, and until the ratification of the 13th Amendment.

At another moment when the nation's long history of racial conflict is once again in the forefront of efforts to address the injustices of our past, it is imperative that we highlight the historic role played by New York City in the struggle against racial injustice. Much of Northern Manhattan has seen increased development pressures that threaten to transform the landscape and erase historic sites such as the Harris-Newhouse Home at 857 Riverside Drive. This building should continue to emphasize the efforts of the abolitionists who were involved with its early history and serve as a place of learning and gathering for the community.

We support the RFE and urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar this site as an individual landmark as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with any questions or updates on this application.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gale A. Brewer in black ink.

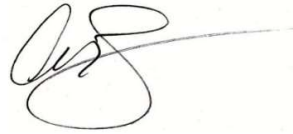
Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Handwritten signature of Mark D. Levine in black ink.

Mark D. Levine
New York City Council Member

Handwritten signature of Robert Jackson in black ink.

Robert Jackson
New York State Senator

Handwritten signature of Al Taylor in black ink.

Al Taylor
New York State Assembly Member