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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

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**Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer to the Landmark Preservation Commission
LP-2632, 2633, 2634, 2636, 2635, and 2642: LGBTQ Historic Sites**

Good morning. I am Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer and I thank the LPC for considering the designation of these six historic LGBTQ sites—five of which are in the great borough of Manhattan. These buildings are a point of pride for the City of New York, as they have witnessed key moments in the hard-fought battle for gay rights.

Like many others here today, I exhort you to designate the Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse, the LGBTQ Community Center, Caffè Cino, James Baldwin's Residence, the Women's Liberation Center and Audre Lorde's Residence as historic landmarks. These six sites commemorate the bravery, advocacy and the works of art and expression that the LGBTQ community has given the City of New York and the world at large. The efforts of those who lived, worked, advocated, and created in these buildings helped make New York City a vanguard in the gay rights movement. These buildings provided a foundation and fostered safe spaces in the continuing fight for equality and equity among the spectrums of sexuality and gender.

Just a walk away from the Stonewall Inn stands Caffè Cino. Playwright William H. Hoffman credited Caffè Cino for allowing him to showcase his work, which focused on the then-taboo and even illegal depiction of homosexuality on stage. James Baldwin, who was not only a groundbreaking gay artist but also a civil rights activist, is also among the champions who would be honored with a designation. Baldwin, who lived part of his life in Paris, also kept a home on the Upper West Side.

The communities created thanks to these sites understood the need for unity and political and cultural strength. The Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse welcomed groups ranging from Lesbian Feminist Liberation, to Gay Youth, to the Salsa Soul Sisters. The Women's Liberation Center, a branch of the Gay Activist Alliance, focused on women and lesbian issues.

These sites are not just history; they continue to serve a purpose today. The LGBT Community Center supported numerous groups and has continued to provide inclusive services. The Women's Liberation Center is now occupied by Nontraditional Employment for Women, a not-for-profit that trains women to work in construction, utility, and maintenance trades. A designation for these two sites would highlight the important work that still takes place inside those walls.

We must celebrate those who have dedicated their lives to uplifting the LGBTQ community and fighting for gay rights, especially during these difficult times. These six places all have a historical and cultural message for the generations that will follow. As we continue the fight for acceptance and equality, it is important that we recognize and appreciate the work that has been done. I applaud this Commission for calendaring these six sites, and I urge you to designate them.

Thank you for your time and consideration.