



VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

File. PS 109-M
cc: J. Nappi
M. Laueriella
C. Francis
J. Loneragan

April 13, 1999

Ms. Ruth L. Pierpont, Director
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Historic Preservation Field Service Bureau
Peebles Island, P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188-0189

Re: Public School 109 - Manhattan — Proposed Demolition
Block 1649, Lot 9
215 East 99th Street, Manhattan

Dear Ms. Pierpont:

As discussed in our letter dated April 9, 1999, we are requesting that your office assess whether the demolition of the P.S. 109 school building in Manhattan will impact historical and/or architectural resources. The proposed demolition will not disturb any sub-surface area outside of the building's footprint and will not have any impact on archeological resources. The building is located on the block bounded by 99th Street to the south, Second Avenue to the east, Third Avenue to the west and 100th Street to the north.

The School Construction Authority has been directed by the New York City Board of Education (BOE) to demolish the P.S. 109 school building for the following reasons:

- **severe structural deterioration;**
- **inadequacies of the existing mechanical systems;**
- **inadequacies of the existing building layout; and**
- **prohibitive costs of repairing and renovating the building.**

P.S. 109, designed by C.B.J. Snyder, was built in 1899. As is typical of a C.B.J. Snyder "H"-shaped building, P.S. 109 was designed with a mixture of Renaissance and Gothic style elements and the sloping hipped roofs common during that time period. The building underwent a modernization in 1952 (refer to Exhibit I).

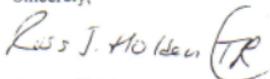
A portion of the gable wall on the northwestern wing of the school building fell off in 1988. As a result, in 1989, Severud-Szegesdy was commissioned by the BOE to determine the nature and extent of damage, make recommendations for temporary protection measures for the public and propose remedial corrective work (refer to Exhibit H). In 1995, the SCA estimated that the cost to repair the masonry, steel, and interior damage throughout the building would be approximately ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) (refer to Exhibit G). This vastly exceeded the BOE's allotted budget and did not include necessary upgrades to the inadequate ventilation system or building layout. A full renovation could cost nearly forty million dollars (\$40,000,000). The BOE decided on June 6, 1996 that the building was not safe enough for student attendance in September.

As a result of continuing deterioration (refer to Exhibit E), sidewalk sheds were placed at the building's entrances to protect against falling masonry, and the Board of Education requested a scope to demolish the building.

The SCA has taken inventory of and assessed other C.B.J. Snyder-designed school buildings in the city with similar architectural and design features to ascertain their levels of preservation and integrity. This study included site visits, photographing of the buildings' interiors and exteriors and a brief description of the individual school's architectural features with an assessment of their condition. This information is included in Exhibit B along with a profile of C.B.J. Snyder who served as the New York City Board of Education's Superintendent of School Buildings between 1891 and 1923.

To assist you in your review of this project, we have enclosed several exhibits, arranged chronologically, documenting the design and condition of the building. Again, we look forward to working with SHPO on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact Beth O'Donnell at (718)472-8273 or Tami Rachelson at (718)472-8308 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Ross J. Holden
Vice President and General Counsel

cc: Harvey Brind
Gary Deane
Rose Diamond, DSF
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Beth O'Donnell
Tami Rachelson
Peter Sweeney
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