

THE GIBBONS HOME, 339 WEST 29TH STREET
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STATION AND DRAFT RIOT SITE

WHEREAS, the home of Abby Hopper Gibbons, James Sloan Gibbons, and their children at 19 Lamartine Place (now 339 W. 29th St.) was the second successive home in Chelsea of that family used as a major Underground Railroad station since 1836, and was the primary New York City (Manhattan) station during the danger-ridden 1850s, *and*

WHEREAS, the Gibbons home in Chelsea was a gathering place and a home-away-from-home for Abolitionist leaders including Frederika Bremer, Lydia Maria Child, William Lloyd Garrison, the Grimke sisters, and Lucretia Mott, *and*

WHEREAS, James Sloan Gibbons sold some of the family's furniture so that the crucial newspaper the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* could continue to be published, with him as its primary funder, and

WHEREAS, the Gibbons home was destroyed internally on July 14, 1863, during the Draft Riots, by means of arson, vandalism, and theft of furnishings, housewares, books, clothing, personal papers, and personal mementos, and the lives of Mr. Gibbons and daughters Lucy and Julia were put at risk, and

WHEREAS, James Sloan Gibbons in 1861 wrote the poem "We Are Coming Father Abraham, Three Hundred Thousand Strong," which became an anthem for volunteer Union soldiers from New York City and elsewhere, and

WHEREAS, Abby Hopper Gibbons and her oldest daughter, Sarah (Sally) courageously worked many months at Point Lookout, Maryland, in a very dangerous zone, and at battlefields such as Winchester, Virginia, nursing Union soldiers and helping escaped Maryland slaves to escape recapture, and

WHEREAS, Abby Hopper Gibbons was a pioneer and an extraordinary leader in social activism on behalf of impoverished New York City residents for more than half a century, working effectively, progressively, generously, and empathetically to help prisoners (especially women), orphans, Civil War veterans, and malnourished working families, among other groups, and

WHEREAS, the two "holdout tenants" at 339 W. 29th St., who have had no boiler or furnace in the building into October 2007, after a pipe explosion, and have lived in unsafe conditions during gutting of much of the building, probably will lose their rent-controlled and rent-stabilized apartments, respectively, if ongoing demolition and construction continue, and

WHEREAS, the 1847 brick structure of that row house is likely to collapse if further demolition and construction work planned by the current owner is done on the building, and

WHEREAS, it is desirable to preserve this building, along with the nine other 1847 houses in one continuous row (333-351 West 29th Street), and the other 1847 row houses that remain on the 300 block of West 29th Street, so that they may continue to provide housing for current residents; and will continue to exhibit architectural features such as uniform cornices and rooflines, back gardens, and window styles; and will serve as reminders of Chelsea's Abolitionists and the escaped slaves whom

they aided, of the social conflicts that resulted in the Draft Riots, of the founders of the first Hebrew Orphan Asylum in New York City, of the denizens of the "bohemian" Petitpas boardinghouse and restaurant, and of activities at Lamartine Hall, scene of the deadly 1871 "Orange Riot"--all of which were housed on that block of West 29th Street for several or many years,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the members of the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club wish to honor the memory of the Gibbons family and fellow Abolitionists by helping to preserve the Chelsea home that they shared to shelter escaped slaves and to aid them to reach safety in Canada, and

THAT said members urge Community Board 4, our elected officials, and the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission to do all in their power to preserve the Gibbon's home as a historic site, and

THAT we urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission, when relevant, to calendar the Gibbon's property for discussion as soon as possible.

Copies Sent on November 8, 2007 to:

Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. Joseph L. Bruno, Senator
Hon. Amanda M. Burden, Chair
Hon. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Senator
Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo, NYS Attorney General
Hon. Thomas K. Duane, Senator
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Betsy Gotbaum, Public Advocate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly Member
Hon. Liz Krueger, Senator
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Hon. Robert M. Morgenthau, NY County District Attorney
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Daniel O'Donnell, Assembly Member
Hon. David A. Paterson, NYS Lieutenant Governor
Hon. Bill Perkins, Senator
Hon. Christine C. Quinn, NYC Council Speaker
Hon. Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the Assembly
Hon. Eliot Spitzer, Governor of the State of New York
Hon. Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. William C. Thompson, Jr., NYC Comptroller
Hon. Anthony Weiner, Congressman
Mr. Robert Trentlyon, Save Chelsea (409W21 Street, NYC 10011)
Ms. Mary Schwartz, Save Chelsea (413W22 Street, NYC 10011)
Manhattan Community Board #4
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Attn: Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
Chelsea Preservation & Planning Comm.
Attn: J. Lee Compton, Chair
Attn: Edward Kirkland, Co-Chair
Attn: Walter Mankoff, Co-Chair