

**MAS Testimony to the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Proposed Designation of 827-831 Broadway**

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October 17, 2017

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827-831 Broadway were designed by Griffith Thomas, architect of several notable buildings in the Noho, Soho Cast-Iron, and Ladies Mile Historic Districts. These buildings were commissioned and owned by the Lorillard family, New York City landowners since the Revolutionary War and founders of the pioneering Lorillard Tobacco Company.

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Shortly after construction in 1866, Wilson Sewing Machine was headquartered at 827-829 Broadway during a time of significant growth and international recognition in the company's history. In addition, cabinetmaker Alexander Roux held shop here for ten years, employing over 120 craftsmen. Six of his pieces are currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, 831 Broadway was the home and studio of four prominent Abstract Expressionist artists of the New York School: Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Larry Poons, and Paul Jenkins. It was here that Elaine de Kooning painted her portrait of President John F. Kennedy, which is displayed in the National Portrait Gallery. Additionally, one of New York's most renowned antique dealers, Howard Kaplan's Antiques, was located here for over thirty years and was visited by influential New Yorkers including Jackie Onassis, John Lennon, Roone Aldridge, and Woody Allen.

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The buildings themselves are cohesive in their construction and in their façade design. They are early examples of the architectural style that became synonymous with Broadway and Lower Manhattan in the late 1800s. 827 Broadway's compelling, nearly intact wooden storefront dates to its 1936 alteration and includes a curved glass projecting entry, raised paneling, and original brass lighting fixtures.

MAS finds 827-831 Broadway deserving of individual landmark status as some of the few remaining buildings from the 1860s located in an undesignated portion of the neighborhood. Without immediate protection, these buildings are in danger of demolition. We respectfully request that the Landmarks Preservation Commission designate these important remnants of our shared history.