

March 22, 2023

Hon. Chair Sarah Carroll
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Urgent Request for Evaluation for Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 229-231 West 14th Street, Manhattan

Dear Chair Carroll,

MAS urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to evaluate the critically important Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe at 229-231 West 14th Street. This church is of great significance to New York City's Hispanic and Latino population and the Greenwich Village and Chelsea neighborhoods. Also known as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and Iglesia Católica Guadalupe, it was the first Spanish-language church in our city. The structure is now threatened because the Archdiocese of New York has deconsecrated and deaccessioned the church, and most likely is contemplating selling the building.

When the church was established in 1902, West 14th Street was the center of the former "Little Spain" neighborhood. From its beginning, Spanish and Mexican immigrants comprised a large part of the congregation, which grew with migration from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Central America. The Spanish-speaking population at the church's beginning was around 45,000; today the city has 2.4 million residents with Hispanic and Latino heritage, more than any other city in the nation. This church serves as an integral reminder of the Little Spain neighborhood, which provided a community hub for Hispanic and Latino residents from across the city. The church's location had an intentional equitable purpose, chosen to be central to a large working-class population. Additionally, the church was a crucial part in the life of activist Dorothy Day, who is now being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church.

The church is architecturally unique, comprising two combined 1850 single-family brownstones, once owned by the Delmonico's Restaurant family. The Spanish Colonial Baroque façade addition was added in 1921, designed by the prolific architect Gustave E. Steinback. The building has been

featured in every edition of the *AIA Guide to New York City* since 1979 and is also eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places.

It is imperative that the building's historic and architectural significance is clear to any potential new owners. There are many notable examples of adaptive reuse of former houses of worship, ranging from museums, music venues, community centers, and housing. This church embodies a history of this ever-changing neighborhood, and it is a vital piece of the Hispanic community's experience in New York. Aesthetically creative and rare, it has been a meaningful presence on busy 14th Street for over a century. We urge you to complete an evaluation of the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe as soon as possible.

Yours truly,



Elizabeth Goldstein
President

cc. Keri Butler, Vice President of Planning and Policy
Aislinn Klein, Advocacy Associate
Andrew Berman, Executive Director, Village Preservation