

Vice Chair Angie Masters
Landmarks Preservation Commission
253 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Re: Public Hearing Held on Church of St. Mary – 440 Grand Street

Dear Vice Chair Angie Masters,

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to designate the Church of St. Mary as a New York City landmark. Built in 1833, St. Mary's is the oldest standing church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, an integral fixture on the Lower East Side for over a century.

The Church on Grand Street has appeared nearly the same since its 1864 façade update and stands as a testament to our city's resilience and diverse population. Re-built from the congregation's former building destroyed by the anti-Catholic "Know Nothing" party, St. Mary's originally served an Irish immigrant community. Today, the Church has a largely Hispanic and Latino congregation, with services held in Spanish and English.

Landmark designation of this Church is critical; while the building holds significant architectural and cultural history, the steadfast presence of St. Mary's orients residents and visitors alike through space and time on the Lower East Side. Now surrounded by 20th-century housing, the church is a powerful testament to how preservation and landmark designation can encourage a distinct sense of place, celebrate layers of community, and simultaneously reflect history while looking towards our shared future.

Sincerely,



Keri Butler

President, Municipal Art Society of New York