

October 14, 2015

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, North  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Landmarks Commissioners:

I am writing to urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to issue a “no action” letter effectively withdrawing from consideration landmark status for Cunard Hall at Wagner College, Staten Island.

I make this request for the following reasons:

The original Cunard villa was built in the early 1850’s, and in the ensuing 165 years, the building has undergone extensive renovations to meet the changing needs of Wagner College and its students.

- In the early 1900’s, a “dining wing” was added
- Circa 1948, the front porch was enclosed to add dining space (accommodating increased post-WW2 enrollment)
- Circa 1958, a major interior renovation was completed
- In 1987, a major exterior renovation included stripping of the stucco surface of the building’s original brick exterior and installation of faux brick exterior sheathing
- In 2013, another major interior renovation was completed

All of these expansions and renovations have greatly changed or removed the original architectural character of the building.

As Borough President, I work closely with all three Staten Island colleges (Wagner, CSI, St. John’s). I am proud of the fact these institutions are growing, evolving and meeting the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century higher education, as well as engaging the community to help with diverse needs throughout the borough.



I would ask LPC to withdraw Cunard Hall from its list of nominations. Throughout its history, Cunard Hall has been in an ever-transformative state. This flexibility allows Wagner College to adapt the structure to need-based improvements serving its education mission.

In short, the exterior appearance is substantially altered from its original form in the 1800's. A landmark status would not be successful in preserving the original character of the building, as the original character has been altered to serve the needs of the students at the college. I believe it would be in the best interest of the community and the College if the landmark consideration was withdrawn.

Thank you for your attention.



James S. Oddo  
Staten Island Borough President

BP:bav

