

December 18, 2008



Mr. Peter A. Bee, Mayor and  
Members of the Board of Trustees  
Incorporated Village of Garden City  
351 Stewart Avenue  
Garden City, New York 11530

RE: St. Paul's School - Comment for Public Record of Hearing on Resolution

Dear Mayor Bee and Members of the Board:

I am writing on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to urge the Village to reject the pending resolution to demolish historic St. Paul's School. Demolition of this significant building would be irreversible, needless, and profoundly short-sighted.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. Our organization was chartered by Congress in 1949 to lead the nation's preservation movement, and we provide leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to protect the irreplaceable places that tell America's story. With the strong support of 283,000 members nationwide, including over 32,000 in the state of NY, and in cooperation with thousands of preservation groups in all 50 states, we work to revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development, and promote environmental sustainability.

St. Paul's School is an architectural and historic landmark with lots of life left. The threat to this impressive site, and the dedicated efforts to save the school first came to the attention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation years ago. We are gravely concerned that the school is more endangered now than ever. At this point, we also feel that the school's future depends largely on the Village Board's vision and will to support its preservation.

Recent setbacks in redeveloping the St. Paul's School site are frustrating. But countless historic properties like this one have been successfully rehabilitated nationwide, including many in far more challenging contexts and after longer periods of vacancy. We encourage the Village to accept its responsibility as the steward of this resource, to preserve an important link to our heritage and an asset with great potential.

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Demolition may seem like the easiest approach, but the dire loss to the community should be fully understood. Our experience with preservation projects across the country - large and small - has shown that reuse of historic buildings consistently builds community pride, contributes greatly to economic vitality, and ensures that places retain their distinctive identity. Destruction of St. Paul's School, on the other hand, would needlessly waste the energy, materials, and great craft employed in its 1883 construction and maintenance, as well as the effort and resources the community has invested in it over the last several years. When all effects are properly weighed, the benefits of preserving the St. Paul's School site are far greater than the costs.

Thank you for considering our comments. The National Trust for Historic Preservation would be pleased to assist the Village in working toward rehabilitation and reuse of the school. Please feel free to contact me at 617-523-0885 or [Roberta\\_Lane@nthp.org](mailto:Roberta_Lane@nthp.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roberta Lane".

Roberta Lane  
Program Officer and Regional Attorney,  
Northeast Office

cc: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities  
Preservation League of New York State  
Committee to Save St. Paul's