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December 17, 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

Dear Mayor Bee and Board of Trustees:

I write to express the Preservation League's support for the preservation of St. Paul's School in Garden City. The Preservation League of New York State is the statewide, non-profit, membership organization dedicated to the protection of New York's diverse and rich heritage of historic buildings, districts and landscapes. We work with many organizations across the state, like the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, that strive to find solutions to preservation challenges.

When the Preservation League listed St. Paul's School on our 2003 Seven to Save list, we highlighted the architectural and historic significance of this magnificent building. This school, designed by architect E.H. Harris in 1883, is a key landmark within Garden City and its history and construction are integral to the history of the village itself. Cornelia Stewart, the widow of Alexander Turney Stewart, founder of Garden City, donated the land and funds for the construction of St. Paul's. The brick came from Stewart's brickworks in Farmingdale. By choosing to demolish St. Paul's, Garden City would be turning its back on its unique and important history as home of the Long Island Episcopal Diocese and one of the first planned suburbs on Long Island.

Garden City has already lost major landmarks such as the Garden City Hotel, designed by nationally-significant architects McKim, Mead & White. When landmarks like these are demolished, it is not just a structure you lose, but a piece of your community. Without investment in buildings like St. Paul's School, a community's sense of place and quality of life diminish.

Donovan Rypkema, principal of a nationally-renowned economic development and real estate consulting firm, has quoted three marketing professors at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, who recently wrote a book on economic development strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *Marketing Places*. According to these authors, "A place's potential depends not so much on a place's location, climate, and natural resources as it does on its human will, skill, energy, values, and organization." As Garden City loses the architecture that differentiates itself from surrounding villages on Long Island, it loses its unique character and with that, risks losing its community's pride of place.

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Garden City can look to its fellow Long Island community, East Hampton, for a case study in how that town came together to determine the best use for a “white elephant” building in its community, the Montauk Playhouse. The Montauk Playhouse is another municipally-owned structure, where there were mixed recommendations on whether to restore or demolish the building. Local advocates banded together and worked with the Town of East Hampton to arrive at a mutually acceptable adaptive use, which includes a day care center, senior center, athletic facilities and a performing arts center. The Montauk Playhouse Community Center Foundation and Town of East Hampton continue to work together to fundraise for the ongoing rehabilitation of this building, which went from a 2004 Seven to Save site to a 2007 Preservation League Excellence in Preservation Award winner.

I urge your office and the Village Trustees to consider the architectural and historic importance of St. Paul’s School as you consider future options on this site. I have attached a list of grant programs potentially available to the village for study and/or rehabilitation of St. Paul’s School.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 518-462-5658, x12 with any questions regarding this letter or any of the potential funding sources. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Erin M. Tobin  
Regional Director, Technical and Grant Programs  
Eastern New York