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**Garment Center Historic District Listed on the National Register of Historic Places**

Contributing Property Owners Now Eligible for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Programs

**January 23, 2009, New York, NY**--The Garment Center Historic District has recently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Known for its pristine collection of 1920's-era loft buildings as well as the source of recent zoning controversy, the historic district comprises nearly 25 blocks in midtown Manhattan, and roughly spans the area from 34<sup>th</sup> to 41<sup>st</sup> Streets, Sixth to Ninth Avenues. Listing on the Register is an honorary designation that makes contributing property owners eligible for participation in certain federal historic preservation tax incentive programs, but does not impose preservation restrictions on affected properties.

Built almost entirely between World War I and the Great Depression for the garment industry, many of the historic district's 251 buildings were designed by preeminent architects, including Ely Jacques Kahn, Emory Roth, Blum & Blum, Schwartz & Gross and Starrett & Van Vleck. These buildings once collectively housed the world's largest garment-manufacturing workforce.

The Garment Center has been the source of controversy since the City Planning Commission's announcement in February of 2007 that it is planning to unveil a still-pending proposal to ease the stringent zoning restrictions of the Special Garment Center District (SGCD), which is situated almost entirely within the new historic district. Enacted in 1987, the SGCD zoning requires maintenance of approximately 5 million square feet (SF) of space for manufacturing and apparel-related uses. Industry groups estimate that approximately 800,000 SF is currently used in such a capacity.



Landlords have complained that the zoning is outdated and artificially depresses rents, while textile unions and manufacturers have fought to preserve affordable production space in Manhattan. Market rents for Class B and C office spaces are currently 2 to 3 times those for comparable spaces restricted for manufacturing use. The new zoning regulations are expected to drastically reduce the amount of square footage reserved for manufacturing use to as little as 350,000 SF, thereby enabling owners to convert existing manufacturing spaces to office use.

“The federal historic preservation tax incentive programs now available to contributing property owners offer substantial economic assistance in both the maintenance and/or conversion of these important historic properties,” explains Trust for Architectural Easements representative Sean Zalka. The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentive Program provides owners with a tax credit equal to 20% of the costs of a qualified rehabilitation of the historic property. The Federal Historic Preservation Easement Program encourages owners of eligible properties to make historic preservation easement donations to qualified organizations such as the Trust for Architectural Easements. Owners who participate in the Program are eligible to receive federal income tax deductions in exchange for the contractual assurance that they will preserve the building in perpetuity.

The Trust protects more than 800 historic buildings across the United States. For more information, visit [www.architecturaltrust.org](http://www.architecturaltrust.org).