



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960  
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2007**  
**No. 07-6**

**CONTACT:** Lisi de Bourbon  
212-669-7938

### **SOHMER & CO. PIANO FACTORY IN QUEENS EARNS NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

*Distinguished by Mansard-Roofed Clock Tower, Prominent Building Along East River in  
Long Island City Housed Piano Maker for Nearly 100 Years*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved the designation of the Sohmer & Company Piano factory building as an individual New York City landmark, citing its monumental architecture and contributions to the City's booming 19<sup>th</sup> century piano manufacturing industry. Built c. 1886 along the East River in Long Island City, the L-shaped structure, dominated by a handsome clock tower, is located at the southeast corner of Vernon Boulevard and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue.



Sohmer & Co. Piano was founded in 1872 along East 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan by German immigrant Hugo Sohmer. The firm specialized in making upright pianos that were popular in many homes across the country, and even counted among its owners famed American songwriter Irving Berlin, who used them to write music. When the company first opened, there were 171 piano manufacturers in New York City.

“Sohmer & Co. played a key role in the history of New York City's piano manufacturing industry, and their building is one of the few 19<sup>th</sup> century factory sites remaining in Queens,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “As the Bloomberg Administration continues to revitalize the East River waterfront, this distinguished landmark will serve as a vivid reminder of the area's industrial past.”

The building was designed in the German Romanesque Revival style by the architectural firm Berger & Baylies, which is responsible for many warehouses and store and loft buildings in the Tribeca section of Manhattan. Its window patterns and monumental brick facades conveyed a solid image, and the building itself served as an advertisement for the company.

Sohmer made pianos at the site until 1982, when the company was bought by Pratt, Read & Co., a piano keyboard manufacturer that relocated the business to Ivoryton, Connecticut. The Adirondack Chair Company, a furniture manufacturer, subsequently acquired the factory

*More*

building. It is currently owned by TTW Realty, LLC, which plans to convert the building for residential use.

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission is the largest municipal preservation agency in the United States. Created in 1965, the Commission is dedicated to preserving New York City's architectural, historical and cultural treasures and protects more than 23,000 buildings in all five boroughs, including 1,152 individual landmarks, 107 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 85 historic districts.