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Landmark designation requested for White Horse Tavern's interior

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The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation submitted a request to landmark the White House Tavern just days after it was discovered that notorious New York City landlord [Steven Croman](#) is part of a group of investors in contract to buy it.

In the request, the society urged the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider a landmark designation of the interior of the historic watering hole, stating, "The potential loss of the interior of this tavern from a recent change in ownership would be a devastating loss, not only to New York City but to the country and the world."

The exterior of the building itself is landmarked as part of the Greenwich Village Historic District. Landmarking the interior would protect woodwork and fixtures that date back generations to when the tavern was a place of gathering for poets and writers the likes of James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg and Dylan Thomas.

In order to be awarded interior landmark status, the space must be open to the public.

"Every year thousands of people from around the globe come to see this place, to grab a drink and walk in the footsteps of these legendary figures," said Andrew Berman, executive director of the preservation society. "It would be a shame if the opportunity to do that was lost."

Croman, who served a prison sentence in the past for tax and mortgage fraud, has a history of tenants' rights violations. In 2017 the attorney general's office found that Croman, owner of 140 apartment buildings throughout Manhattan, had fraudulently refinanced loans as part of a scheme to push rent-regulated tenants out of their homes. The state last year opened a restitution fund for rent-stabilized tenants he harassed.

Eytan Sugarman of Hunt and Fish Club NYC signed a 15-year lease on the building, located at 567 Hudson St., under the condition that the bar be maintained as is, according to the *Commercial Observer*.

Anthony Scaramucci, who worked briefly as the director of communications for the Trump administration, was rumored to have been involved in the White Horse Tavern sale. Meridian Capital Group's James Famularo, who brokered the lease on behalf of Sugarman, told the *Observer* Scaramucci was not involved.

Along with the bar, the sale includes two other retail spaces and 17 apartments—15 of which are rent-stabilized.

Because of Croman's reputation and track record and Sugarman's reputation to serve high-class clientele, the urgency to landmark the tavern is pressing for the society, Berman suggests.

"Even if the new landlord was somebody with a better reputation and track record than Mr. Croman, we would still be concerned. And even the most reliable of person's promises that they won't make any changes doesn't mean that that's not going to happen. Certainly, Mr. Croman's record speaks for itself. It really shouldn't be left to chance or the winds of the new owner," Berman said.