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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

January 16, 1984

Landmarks Preservation Commission
20 Vesey Street
New York NY 10007

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing in connection with the proposed tower over the New-York Historical Society's building.

I am opposed to the proposal to erect a building on top of the present structure because I respect the decisions of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. You have designated the Society's building as a landmark, and also as part of a historic district. There does not seem to me to be any way in which someone can use a designated landmark as the base for any other kind of building and still retain the original qualities of the landmark. There may be a dozen good economic reasons for building the new apartment house. I am not convinced that it would do any damage to the streetscape of Central Park West that has not already been done by older high-rise apartments. I am not persuaded that we need to preserve a few blocks of Central Park West free from towers so that we may appreciate Olmsted's vision of sylvan isolation. I also think that if someone wants to put up a highrise apartment house, this is a good site because no one lives on two sides of it, and on those two sides at least, no one will be overshadowed by it. All the same, if you believe in your own landmark designations--and this one twice over--I cannot see how you can allow this gross violation of it.

If the Society's building and the historic district were designated for historic reasons, the introduction of a dramatic new highrise building certainly intrudes upon history. If the Society's building was designated for aesthetic reasons, making it the base of something else changes it completely. For these logical reasons, and to protect your own landmark designations in the future, I urge you to reject the highrise apartment proposal.

Sincerely,

Carol Herselle Krinsky

Carol Herselle Krinsky
Professor of Fine Arts