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STATEMENT BY SENATOR MANFRED OHRENSTEIN BEFORE
THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
IN OPPOSITION TO THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION,
JANUARY 24, 1984

I come before the Commission today to urge the denial of the request by the New York Historical Society for a "Certificate of Appropriateness" to construct a 23-story apartment tower over its museum at Central Park West and 77th Street.

If the Landmarks Preservation legislation was enacted to ensure that buildings exemplifying "fine architecture of distinct periods in the City's history" survive, clearly the designation of the Historical Society building should not be violated by the addition of a 340-foot luxury apartment building. The New York Historical Society was designated a landmark by the Commission not once, but twice. In 1966 it was one of the first buildings in the City to be so designated. Then in 1973 it received its second designation as part of the West 76th Street Historical District. This double designation indicates to me that the Commission determined that the Historical Society building was architecturally distinctive from many others and should be preserved. I believe it would be inappropriate to diminish this distinction by constructing another building on top of it.

I fully sympathize with the not-for-profit institutions such as the Historical Society which are finding it difficult during this period of economic crisis to maintain valuable collections and exhibitions. I do believe, however, that better ways can be found to alleviate the problem of lack of funds than by eroding the City's Landmarks Preservation Law. It is my understanding that the Central Park West Preservation

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Committee has offered to provide \$5,000 to the Historical Society to study ways to identify new sources of funding. I have also been told that several imaginative ideas to raise funds have been successfully utilized by programs in nearby communities. I urge the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society to seek alternative funding actively and to explore the feasibility of all suggested means.

Again, I urge you to reject the application for the "Certificate of Appropriateness" before you.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.