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January 23, 2008

Councilwoman Gale A. Brewer
563 Columbus Avenue
New York, New York 10024

Dear Gale,

As a West Sider who has a special appreciation for the strong links between historic preservation, the environment and quality of life, I am very pleased that LANDMARK WEST!, an organization on whose board I have served for many years, is undertaking an innovative open space study in partnership with *NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies* and *The CUNY Institute for Sustainable Cities*. This unique and timely project seeks to quantify the environmental value of vegetation planted in the combined rear yards behind the rows of brownstones on the Upper West Side, covering roughly 115 acres of land – 14% the size of Central Park, believe it or not.

This project, for the first time that I know of, targets the potential environmental benefits that privately-owned vegetation conveys to the New York City urban fabric. Temperature differences, air pollution removal and stormwater issues will be studied and the project will complement existing analyses of public open spaces and Mayor Bloomberg's NYC PLANYC green initiative. LW! also plans to develop a handbook that will translate the scientific data that is gathered into an easily accessible guide for residents and business owners, putting usable information into the hands of Upper West Siders who wish to enhance the environmental benefits of even small pieces of land.

I hope that you will be able to assist with securing funding for this important project to create a basis for more informed preservation and environmental decision- and policy-making.

Sincerely,

Victor A. Kovner

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