

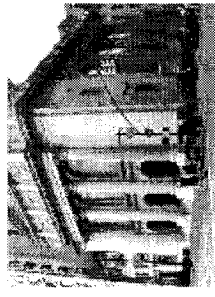
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Upper West Side Synagogue Battles Landmarks Commission Over New Building

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MARCH 03RD, 2003

The Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District runs from West 62nd Street to West 96th Street. One block in the district is currently in the spotlight: West 70th Street.

"The north side of the block is entirely row house buildings which are four to five-story brownstones, most of them," says Kate Wood, the Executive Director of Landmark West. "They're very different from Central Park West, which is lined with institutional structures like the synagogue and taller apartment buildings."

The synagogue is Shearith Israel. The country's oldest Jewish congregation, it has been in the neighborhood since 1654, and in its landmark building since 1897.

"We're the oldest kid or building on this block, and we will be here for many generations, so we are concerned with what this block will look like 50 years or 100 years from now," says Congregation President Peter Neustadter.

What these two opposing sides disagree on is how this block should look just a few years from now. At issue is the congregation's plan to tear down their old community center and build a new one that would be part of a 14-story building.

"We were very careful to design the minimum-size building that will finance the project, and we're very sensitive to our neighbors," says Neustadter.

Since this is a Historic District, the Landmarks

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DIAL UP-BROADBAND

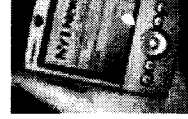
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The First Attack

On the tenth anniversary of the first attack on the World Trade Center, NY1 News looks back on the 1993 bombing aftermath.



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of character with the low-rise, mid-block row houses prevalent on West 70th Street.

Neustadter says they are a Central Park West building, and the building lot is not in the mid-block.

"If you look to the north and to the south of where we're standing, you will see that the buildings here are 18, 20-story buildings, and they go way past the point of our building," says Neustadter.

He feels whatever decision the Landmarks Preservation Commission makes should be.

"If one person, one property owner, is allowed to develop the lot in this way, it opens the door for other people to be able to do the same thing. It sets a precedent," says Wood.

For now, the debate rages on. If the Landmarks Preservation Commission approves the new building, the City Planning Commission will still need to rule on certain waivers before the project can begin.

- *Paul Messina*

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