

Right now, get  
ALL 3 SERVICES




Recent Editions - [Mon.](#) | [Tue.](#) | [Wed.](#) | [Thu.](#) | [Fri.](#)

April 13, 2007 edition

Advertise  
Subscribe  
Contact Us

HOME NEW YORK NATIONAL FOREIGN EDITORIAL POLITICS BUSINESS REAL ESTATE+ ARTS+ FC

# REAL ESTATE

Comment D

## Preservationists Take Aim in Court At Open Records Law

By [MATTHEW CHAYES](#)

*Special to the Sun*

April 12, 2007

Preservationists battling a 350-year-old Upper West Side synagogue's expansion efforts added a new wrinkle to their fight yesterday, asking a state judge to overturn what they say is a citywide ban put into place after September 11, 2001, on releasing blueprints of "sensitive" locations without written permission from property owners.

Landmark West, a 22-year-old nonprofit group, says building plans filed with the city help rally community opposition to projects like Congregation Shearith [Israel's](#) petitions to landmark and zoning boards to put up a school and a condominium behind the landmark sanctuary in a brownstone neighborhood on West 70th Street.

"Transparency is supposed to be a hallmark of the Bloomberg administration, and to respond to a community organization's request for public documents by saying that we may be terrorists — I mean, it isn't sound public policy," the group's executive director, [Kate Wood](#), said yesterday.

The city calls the non-disclosure of some building plans the "sensitive building policy." The preservation group filed a lawsuit this week in [Manhattan Supreme Court](#) calling the security policy "absurd" and challenging whether the city can deem properties like

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

religious institutions as "sensitive" and restrict access to public records.

"Due to the 9/11 tragedy, the records for the block and lot or address listed in your request are considered 'sensitive'," according to a letter from a records clerk excerpted in the suit. "In order to obtain agency clearance to release these records, please forward a letter from the owner/managing agent (on record) authorizing you to have access."

A spokeswoman for the Buildings Department, [Kate Lindquist](#), confirmed that the city maintains such a policy but declined to elaborate, citing another city policy of not commenting on pending litigation.

**Luxury NYC Condos**

Huge 2 & 4 Bedroom Units In the Heart of the Upper West Side

[www.harsenhouse.com](http://www.harsenhouse.com)

**Little Shop of Crafts NYC**

Pottery, Plastercraft, Mosaics Beading, Art Classes and more.

[www.littleshopny.com](http://www.littleshopny.com)

**NY Cosmetic Dentists**

The Top Cosmetic Surgery Authority. Find New York Cosmetic Dentists.

[CosmeticSurgeryInsider.net](http://CosmeticSurgeryInsider.net)

**New York Sightseeing Tour**

Don't leave your guide on the bus Take only guided tour in New York

[www.NewYorkPartyShuttleTours.com](http://www.NewYorkPartyShuttleTours.com)

Ads by Google

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, federal and state agencies have also more strictly limited which documents they will release under open-records laws.

The city's Landmarks Preservation Commission approved the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue's project last year, and a petition for a variance to city zoning laws is pending now. A message seeking comment left yesterday on Shearith Israel's office answering machine wasn't immediately returned.

**Reader comments on this article**

Title	By	Date
<a href="#">City enabling architectural and community destruction</a> [194 words]	A. Vosch	Apr 13, 2007 10:20

**Comment on this article**

**Name:**

**Email Address:**

*Email me if someone replies to my comment*

**Title of Comments:**

**Comments:**

Send Comment

**Note:** Comments are screened, and in some cases edited, before posting. We reserve the right to reject anything we find objectionable.

[Click here to see the top 25 recent comments.](#)

---

**Luxury NYC Condos**

Huge 2 & 4 Bedroom Units In the Heart of the Upper West Side  
[www.harsenhouse.com](http://www.harsenhouse.com)

**Gwathmey Siegel Design**

240 Park Avenue South Manhattan  
1 to 3 Bedroom Luxury Condos  
[www.240pas.com](http://www.240pas.com)

**NYC Living Real Estate**

Service beyond Expectation NYC  
Sales, Rentals, Condos, Coops  
[nyclivingrealty.com](http://nyclivingrealty.com)



105 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

© 2007 The New York Sun, One SL, LLC. All rights reserved.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#)