



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

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**Statement of the Historic Districts Council
To Manhattan Community Board 7
Regarding the Special Discretionary Actions
Proposed for the Lincoln Center Complex
January 20, 2005**

The Historic Districts Council is the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods and structures. While some might find faults with the design of Lincoln Center, no one can reasonably dispute the architectural and historical significance of the complex. As the first major cultural center in America, designed by some of the 20th century's most prominent architects, the entire complex was determined in 2000 to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This distinction confers with it protection under municipal, state and national law to determine the impact of proposed government actions on the property, and where possible, to mitigate those actions as to not have an adverse impact.

HDC's principal concerns about the proposed changes to the complex are based in their treatment of the historically and architecturally significant elements – such as the Julliard Building, designed by Pietro Belluschi, and Plaza North, originally designed by Dan Kiley. Because we are unable to be at the presentation tonight and thus, might be unaware of any changes to the plans since last we saw them, we will keep our comments general and hope to submit more detailed comments shortly.

HDC's concerns about the proposed changes to the Julliard Building are that the proposed intervention, which will follow the diagonal of Broadway, will detract from the original design and remove all the significant features of the Broadway façade (i.e. the travertine paneling and the symmetrical configuration of the rectangular windows.) This is the façade most familiar from the public way and should be handled with the most care. We would welcome further exploration of other options that would fit the needs of the building's program, such as a sensitively-designed rooftop addition.

The Plaza North proposal, as we saw it, seems to be rough-handed in its treatment of the surviving Kiley landscape design elements. Specifically, the change in pool dimensions and the removal of trees from the eastern edge of the pool unfavorably alters the minimalist geometry of the landscape. In addition, the removal of the travertine planters also has a negative impact to the design integrity of the complex, which is sustained by the commonality of the materials used in the various structures – from small to large.

HDC regrets not being able to attend this evening's meeting, and looks forward to continuing to participate in this process as it unfolds.