

mega-development invading our neighborhood - e.g., 200 Amsterdam, West 66th Street

Helen has proven to be a vigorous and effective defender of the Upper West Side against inappropriate and out-of-context development. Two examples illustrate a track record of effectiveness. When faced with a proposal for a 668 foot tower at 200 Amsterdam Avenue, Helen worked with neighborhood organizations and joined a zoning challenge to stop the project. This challenge resulted in the Department of Buildings halting the project to audit its lack of compliance with open space requirements. The experience at 200 Amsterdam led Helen to begin drafting legislation that will require Council Member and Community Board notification of development rights transfers in order to ensure that the community is able to react in real time to potential developments- rather than having to play catch up once a developer has decided to make its plans public. The proposed development at 711 West End Avenue is another key example. This proposal was to build a ten-story luxury condominium building directly on top of a rentstabilized building. For obvious reasons, this greatly concerned not just the tenants of that building but parents at P.S. 75 across the street. Working with the tenants and with other elected officials, Helen pushed back against this project and made it clear that the safety and quality of life concerns it raised were unacceptable. In the end, the Department of Finance put a halt to the project, as the too-clever-by-half plans to have two separate buildings occupying the same footprint were proven incompatible with existing tax lot regulations. In addition to fighting back against specific proposals, Helen helped protect more of the Upper West Side against out-of-context development by strongly supporting the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension II. This historic district expansion added close to 350 buildings to the preservation rolls and ensures that proposals like 711 West End will not spread to similar sites on West End Avenue and Riverside Drive--and also ensures that if the developer at 711 itself needs to change their plans to address the Department of Finance's concerns, a Landmarks review process will be triggered. In these instances and others, Helen has worked with neighbors to devise a successful plan of attack to push back against out-of-scale-development. Upper West Siders know that in Helen, they have an effective champion in the City Council.