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STATEMENT OF THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
REGARDING CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL'S PROPOSAL
TO CONSTRUCT A 15-STORY, 168-FOOT TOWER
ON WEST 70TH STREET
JULY 1, 2003

In response to Congregation Shearith Israel's proposed 15-story building in the midblock of West 70th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation has several concerns. As you may know, this is a block dominated by 60-foot rowhouses. We feel that the proposed tower is entirely inappropriate for the current scale of the block, as well as the Upper West Side Historic District.

This proposal is of particular importance, as its approval would set a dangerous precedent that could affect historically significant neighborhoods throughout the city. In considering such a proposal, it is imperative that we respect and retain contextual zoning, particularly with regard to matters of scale.

Also troubling to GVSHP is the broad array of special permissions being asked for in this case. We feel that this proposal must be held to the highest standards, and it is unclear at this time how this will be achieved.

I urge you to join GVSHP, Manhattan Community Board #7, the Municipal Art Society, Historic Districts Council, Landmark West!, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, and a growing list of others in opposition to this proposal. We ask that you help us work to preserve and protect this community, and to help us prevent future developments that threaten the character and scale of our historic neighborhoods.

Thank you.

"Established in 1980 to protect the cultural and architectural heritage of Greenwich Village."