



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
 OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
 BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

C. VIRGINIA FIELDS
 BOROUGH PRESIDENT

July 1, 2003

Hon. Robert B. Tierney
 Chairman
 Landmarks Preservation Commission
 Municipal Building - 9th Floor
 New York, NY 10007

Re: Congregation Shearith Israel
 8 West 70th Street
 Upper West Side Historic District
Manhattan

Dear Mr. Chairman:

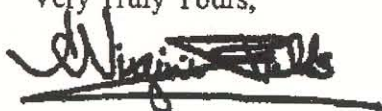
I have recently reviewed the revisions to the application that Congregation Shearith Israel will be presenting to the Commission at its public hearing on July 1, 2003. As you know, I had previously expressed my reservations about the original design. However, I find the revisions to be a significant improvement over the original plans. I now therefore recommend that the Commission approve the requests for a Certificate of Appropriateness and a report to satisfy the requirements of Section 74-711(1) of the Zoning Resolution. I regret that my schedule does not permit me to personally appear in order to elaborate on the reasons for my support.

In reviewing these revisions, I believe that Congregation Shearith Israel has successfully integrated its new building with each of the three important preservation objectives. First, the building is now an elegant partner with the Synagogue, which is an individual landmark. Second, the new building will be a sympathetic and contextual addition to the Central Park West skyline as viewed from Central Park, the City's premier scenic landmark. Thus, the building is appropriate to the context of the Upper West Side Historic District in two important respects. The southeast portion of the Historic District consists primarily of multiple dwellings and commercial structures, and as such the proposed building sits amidst structures of similar height and bulk. And with regard to the eastern edge of the Historic District, the proposed building extends west into the midblock to approximately the same distance as the other Central Park West buildings in the District.

The proposal appears to be suitable candidate for the Commission's assistance in pursuing a Section 74-711 Special Permit. Its stewardship of the landmarked Synagogue has earned praise from preservationists throughout the City. There appears to be more than enough preservation work ahead to warrant the Commission's involvement in pursuing the zoning waivers required to promote a preservation purpose.

I remain concerned, as do many of my constituents, with the fact that over 50,000 sf of zoning floor area remains unutilized in the present development plans. Local residents should not be required to remain in fear of further development on this site, nor of the sale of the unused development rights to another party. I ask the Commission to take whatever steps it can to assure that the remaining development rights cannot be used. I also ask that the Commission require the Congregation to adhere to the best practices for excavation of this site so that the other historic buildings in the Historic District are protected.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Virginia Fields", is written over a horizontal line.

C. Virginia Fields
Manhattan Borough President