

# FRIENDS



OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

20 East 69th Street New York, New York 10021

(212) 535-2526

Fax (212) 535-2155

info@friends-ues.org

www.friends-ues.org

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December 2, 2002

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS HEARING  
TESTIMONY BY LISA KERSAVAGE

Re: 03-2628- Block 36, 37, lot 1122, 8 West 70th Street - Congregation Shearith Israel  
Synagogue - Individual Landmark, Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Madam Chair, Honorable Commissioners:

FRIENDS is testifying on this issue because both the East and West Sides share a common and precious characteristic: low rise mid-blocks of residential buildings. This building pattern is essential to preserve in order to maintain the sense of place of both neighborhoods.

This proposal to build a 14-story building on a mid-block is egregiously inappropriate. In order to receive a modification of the use and bulk regulations under Section 74-711, the Commission must find that the bulk of the modifications relate harmoniously to the landmark building or buildings in the Historic District. It is eminently clear that the proposed 14-story building is not harmonious to the landmarked synagogue itself, nor to the dominant character of the mid-blocks in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. Off the Avenue, West 70<sup>th</sup> Street, like most of the mid-blocks on the Upper West Side, is made up primarily of 4-6 story rowhouses. This proposal is contrary to that pattern.

Because the proposed building would be a domineering presence over the synagogue and incompatible to the building pattern in the historic district, it should not be approved. Thank you.