



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

LEON BOGUES
28TH DISTRICT
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January 24, 1984

Statement by Senator Leon Bogues

Good afternoon Commissioner Norman and Honorable members of the board. I am State Senator Leon Bogues of the 29th Senatorial District, and I am here today to express my opposition to the plan proposed by the New York Historical Society to construct an apartment tower addition on top of their existing headquarters building at 170 Central Park West.

As a community in flux, it is absolutely essential that we as elected officials and community leaders fight to preserve the unique character, fabric, and beauty of our West-Side community. The construction of this tower jeopardizes the landmark status of Central Park and the Museum of Natural History which both face (from different sides) the Historical Society. In addition this incongruous 340 ft. apartment tower will permanently change the low-rise character of the historic district, aside from overwhelming the landmarked museum and casting a shadow on Central Park.

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But more importantly, the construction of such a tower, which requires permission from the Landmarks Commission places considerable doubt on the need for the existence of a Landmark Preservation Commission. If it is the function of such an agency to render judgement on the landmark status of buildings and in so doing to preserve these "landmarking" qualities, allowing the Historical Society to build damages the credibility of the Commission and defeats the pupose of its existence - to preserve and protect the traditional, and architectural character of New York's communities.

In addition, the Historical Society has not provided definitive or sufficient evidence of financial hardship, as Mr. Zuccotti verified in his statements today, to substantiate the need to further develop on this site to meet costs. As well, the Society has openly admitted that the additional space it would gain from such a building, which ostensibly was the reason the Historical Society derived at such a plan, is less than 10% of the total footage of the apartment tower.

As a building that has had the distinction of being designated a landmark on two seperate occasions, it is incumbant upon the

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Landmarks Commission to not renege on the landmarking status of the New York Historical Society building in its present condition. I urge the Landmarks Commission to deny permission to the Historical Society on its proposed plan.