

Dear Friends:

On Thursday, February 8, 2007, the New-York Historical Society presented its current Landmarks application for alterations to the existing building to the Parks and Preservation Committee of Community Board 7. This application addresses the following immediate needs:

- . Providing handicapped accessibility on Central Park West (visitors in wheelchairs currently either enter through the side door, via a ramp plus a manually-operated lift or, if in electric wheelchairs, through the loading dock);

- . Improving egress so that in an emergency, disabled visitors, staff and others can be evacuated quickly;

- . Extending the windows on 77th Street as envisioned by the building's original architects but never completed because of lack of funds. These alterations would also improve the streetscape on West 77th Street, opening the building to the street;

- . Replacing and restoring the mullioned casement windows throughout the Historical Society to prevent further water damage and deterioration to the building, the complete disintegration of the windows, and the protection of collections that are sensitive to humidity and rapid temperature change;

- . Enabling an internal renovation designed to make the Historical Society into a modern, accessible, community education, teaching and learning facility for children, scholars and neighbors.

Unfortunately, although the majority of speakers at the meeting spoke in favor of the Historical Society's proposal, and although the Historical Society had met on many occasions with members of the community and had modified its plans in order to incorporate the community's needs and wishes, the Committee voted in an unprecedented way to hold the New-York Historical Society hostage. The Committee resolution states that any determination of approval of necessary changes for the safety of users and the long-term protection of the building should be contingent upon discussing plans for a completely separate project -- with no immediate timetable -- involving the Historical Society's antiquated Library tower and vacant lots.

We believe that the Parks and Preservation Committee of Community Board 7 acted improperly by arbitrarily linking what we might do sometime in the future to its mandated Charter responsibility: weighing in on what we plan to do to ensure accessibility for the handicapped, the safety of people in the building, and the preservation and maintenance of the building and its precious museum and library collections.

There is a full Community Board 7 meeting on March 6th, at 7PM. We urge you to attend, and to speak in favor of the Historical Society's proposal to make its building accessible, safe, environmentally sound and welcoming to the public. We also urge you to write or e-mail the following elected and other officials, expressing your view that wheelchair accessibility, emergency egress improvement, much-needed window replacement for the safety of the Historical Society's precious collections, etc., should not be held hostage to any future application that the Historical Society might make. Nor should the Historical Society be asked or told to forego its right as an owner to file future applications in exchange for a fair consideration of the current application.

We have provided, below, e-mail addresses for the officials who need to hear from the Society's supporters. Just click on the blue link and let them know that you support the proposed renovations in order to address handicapped accessibility, emergency egress, protection of our collections, and

renovation of our public space.

Thank you once again for your support of the New-York Historical Society's important mission.

Honorable Christine Quinn  
City Council Speaker  
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Michael Cardozo  
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Honorable Richard Gottfried  
NYS Assembly Member  
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Honorable Shelly Fine  
Chair, Manhattan Community Board 7  
[mail@cb7.org](mailto:mail@cb7.org)

Honorable Robert Tierney  
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
[comments@lpc.nyc.gov](mailto:comments@lpc.nyc.gov)

Honorable Scott Stringer  
Manhattan Borough President  
[bp@manhattanbp.org](mailto:bp@manhattanbp.org)

Honorable Thomas K. Duane  
NYS Senator  
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Honorable Linda B. Rosenthal  
NYS Assembly Member  
[RosentL@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:RosentL@assembly.state.ny.us)

Honorable Gale A. Brewer  
NYC Council Member  
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