



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

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February 8, 2007

Hon. Shelly Fine, Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 7  
Via Fax: 212 603-3082

Dear Chair Fine,

Unfortunately, the Historic Districts Council is unable to attend tonight's meeting as we are hosting a candidate forum for the special election in Brooklyn's 40th Council District at the same time. However, we have been following the New-York Historical Society proposal as far as we are able to, and did attend last week's public meeting regarding the renovation plans to the landmark building. We understand that the Historical Society is submitting these plans for the committee's consideration and will be forwarding them to the Landmarks Preservation Commission in due course. HDC is troubled by the segmentation of the plans as presented, and requests the Committee and the Community Board to delay making any decision until the entire development plan is presented in full. As we understand the development plans, the tower development is almost certainly inextricably linked to the renovation plans. HDC's analysis of the site leads us to believe that N-YHS will be requesting height and set-back requirements through the issuance of a special permit from the City Planning Commission, pursuant to section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution. One of the conditions of the special permit are that the application "include a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that *a program has been established for continuing maintenance that will result in the preservation of the subject building or buildings*, and that such use or bulk modifications, or restorative work required under the continuing maintenance program, contributes to a preservation purpose". In order for almost any kind of tower to be built on the site, this kind of permit will be required for any height and set-back waivers and the treatment of the existing landmark building must be considered. Thus it follows that any tower development would be dependent on the treatment of the existing building and to pretend otherwise is misleading. HDC therefore respectfully requests the Parks & Preservation Committee of Manhattan Community Board 7 to delay rendering any decision until the full details of the complete development proposal are presented in a public hearing. To opine on this segmented proposal now would not be fair to the historic structure and would only serve to undercut the ministerial authority of the community board by forcing the body to act with incomplete knowledge.

Thank you for your consideration and again, I apologize for not being able to submit my views in person.

Sincerely,



Simeon Bankoff  
Executive Director

cc: Council member Gale Brewer  
Landmark West!  
West 76th Street Block Association