

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

March 20, 2007

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C.
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE
NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN MANHATTAN**

Good afternoon, Chair Tierney and Commissioners. I am Roger Lang, speaking on behalf of The New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The Landmarks Conservancy's Public Policy Committee has met with the leadership of the New York Historical Society and its design team on two occasions to review emerging plans for the proposal which was just presented to you.

Our most recent meeting was on February 15, after which we sent a letter with our comments and suggestions. I will submit a copy of that letter for the record with this statement. At the time, we concluded that The Landmarks Conservancy could not support the proposal.

We insist that this venerable building, a "triple landmark," be treated with the utmost respect. Any changes should be minimal, must arise from important functional needs, and entail the least possible loss of historic fabric.

It is evident from today's presentation that some of our prior concerns about the entrance details and loss of fabric have been addressed. Others, such as the lowering of the sills to enlarge the windows on the West 77th Street facade – which we still find inappropriate – have not.

We intend to meet again with the applicants in the next few weeks in order to review and discuss the current proposal. Then we will send you a letter regarding our position on the proposal before you.

If you do not decide the matter today, I respectfully request that you hold the record open so that our letter may be part of the record.

Thank you for the opportunity to express The Landmarks Conservancy's views.

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February 16, 2007

Dr. Lousie Mirrer
President and Chief Executive Officer
New-York Historical Society
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024

Subject: **Proposed Alterations to Museum Facades**

Dear Louise:

Thank you for convening your team for another presentation to the Landmarks Conservancy's Public Policy Committee yesterday. We appreciate your doing so.

We think the design revisions are heading in the right direction. However, we still do not think that an appropriate solution has been achieved.

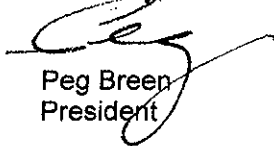
A more modest and surgical intervention for the new entrance seems possible which would meet your goals and also respect what is a top-tier landmark building. We have in mind a solution that would minimize the loss of historic fabric by saving more of the central pediment and surrounds of the existing central doorway, restricting the flanking new door openings to the width of the existing windows, and retaining the monumental bronze doors.

We have no objection to the new ramps, kiosks, or proposed replacement of the glass block on the Central Park West facade.

However, we cannot support the proposed changes on the northern facade fronting West 77th Street. We think the present entrance should be retained, along with the interior steps and lift. The proposed alternative, with a raised sill, would be unsightly and inappropriate, especially when a primary entrance for disabled persons, without a lift, is created at the expanded Central Park West entrance. Nor can we support the lowering of the window sills on the proposed café level, for which we see no compelling rationale.

We offer these suggestions in good faith and hope that you will consider them as you have our earlier input. We would like to work with you to achieve an outcome that The Landmarks Conservancy could support.

Sincerely,


Peg Breen
President

cc: Paul Byard
Valerie Campbell