

****SAVE OUR SKYLINE****

As reported in the *New York Times* on November 1, 2006, the New-York Historical Society plans to redesign the Central Park West façade of its Landmark building between West 76th and 77th Streets; build a 280-foot glass tower cantilevered over the Landmark; build an auditorium annex on the West 76th Street residential block; and add a large penthouse directly on top of the Landmark.

You are getting this notice as someone who is all too familiar with the threat such inappropriate architectural schemes pose for our city's Landmarks and Historic Districts. The Historical Society's announcement arrives on the heels of other major alteration/construction projects proposed in historic neighborhoods all over Manhattan—in some cases, approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Experts have called the Historical Society, an Individual Landmark, and its surroundings, protected by two historic districts, one of New York's most harmonious concentrations of Landmark architecture.¹

The Landmarks Commission's official designation reports hail the "dignity and grandeur" of the Landmark and "the special skyline silhouette" of Central Park West that has remained largely unchanged since the early 20th century. **If this Landmark can be defaced, all are at risk. If a tower can be built here, one can be built anywhere in our city.**

In 1984, *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger called attention to non-profit institutions' increasingly aggressive bids to add skyscrapers on top of or next to Landmarks. He wrote:

When the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission voted Tuesday to reject plans for towers at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church and the New-York Historical Society, it was issuing a decisive verdict against the growing trend toward turning landmark buildings into profit-making real estate." (*NYT* 6/14/84)

That was then, this is now. Today's Landmarks Commission is disturbingly receptive to tower plans, feeding a trend that is more powerful today than ever.

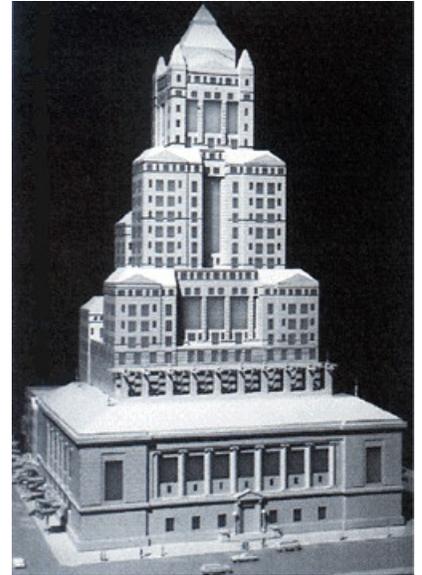
Now that you are alerted and informed, it is time for action. The goal of this letter is to assemble a group of New Yorkers who care about the future of the New-York Historical Society, the historic resources surrounding it, and the precedent that would be cemented by another inappropriate tower. We must unite behind the message that our Landmarks are not "development opportunities" to be exploited. We must mobilize immediately, or we can kiss the skyline goodbye.

Please contact LANDMARK WEST today to sign on to the Save Our Skyline coalition. 212-496-8110, landmarkwest@landmarkwest.org

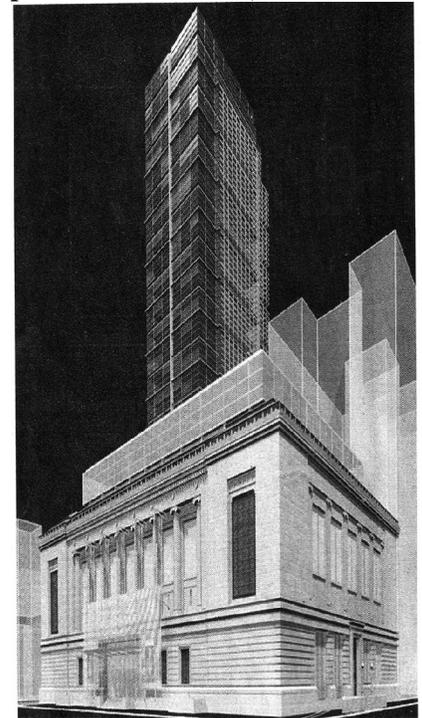
¹ The New York-Historical Society is one of relatively few Landmarks to be protected three times: as an Individual Landmark in 1966 (one of the first Landmarks to be designated) and as part of both the Central Park West - 76th Street Historic District (in 1973) and the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District (in 1990). It is adjacent to Central Park (a Scenic Landmark), the American Museum of Natural History and the Fourth Universalist Society (both Individual Landmarks).

It's déjà vu all over again...

1984 proposed tower addition to the New-York Historical Society



Tower and CPW façade plan, as published in the *NYT*, 11/1/2006



This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.