



March 19, 2007

Hon. Robert B. Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Re: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West

Officers

Christopher Holbrook
Chair

Caroline B. Mason
Vice Chair

Thomas J. Schwarz
Vice Chair

Wendy E. Feuer
Secretary

Robert J. Kafin
Treasurer

Anne G. Older
Chair Emeritus

Board of Trustees

Pamela S. Banker

George H. Beane

Barry Bergdoll

William L. Bernhard

Constance L. Clapp

Henry S.F. Cooper

Joan K. Davidson

William E. Davis, Jr.

Stephen A. Facey

Arthur N. Field

Lionel Goldfrank III

Mark Goldman

Tony Goldman

Huyler C. Held

George L. Howell

Marilynn G. Karp

Robert J. Kresse

Judith M. LaBelle

Richard J. Lippes

Gregory R. Long

Jean M. McCarroll

F. Eugene Romano

Daniel Romualdez

David R. Sloan

Elizabeth (Zibby) F. Tozer

Samuel G. White, FAIA

Caroline Rob Zaleski

Jay DiLorenzo
President

Dear Chairman Tierney and Members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission:

The Preservation League is New York State's not-for-profit, statewide advocacy organization, dedicated to the protection of the state's diverse and rich heritage of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes. Through our programs and statewide advocacy we actively encourage historic preservation by public and private organizations, agencies, municipalities, and individuals throughout New York State.

Today the Landmarks Preservation Commission has an opportunity to protect one of New York's most notable historic landmarks – the home of the New York Historical Society located at 170 Central Park West. We urge the Commission to reject the changes proposed to the building's façade which we feel would seriously and permanently alter this landmark building.

170 Central Park West is notable for its recognition as a local historic landmark and as a contributing element in two of Central Park West's local historic districts. As such, the Historical Society's home is recognized by our organization as an important landmark of statewide significance. This makes the proposal to alter the façade of this building very troubling.

Although we recognize that alterations to historic buildings are sometimes necessary to accommodate their continued use, we are not convinced that this is the situation facing the Historical Society. We would be hard-pressed to envision a set of circumstances that would warrant such drastic façade alterations, including the removal and replacement of doors and windows, in a building of this significance. Furthermore, it has been made clear that plans are underway to add a mixed-use, museum/residential building on the site. It seems to us that the current façade alteration proposal before the Commission should not be viewed as a stand-alone project but rather as part of the larger alteration plan the Historical Society has for the landmark building.

For these reasons we hope you will echo the decision of Community Board 7 to oppose the proposal before you. Thank you for your consideration and please call on us if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Jay A. DiLorenzo
President