

TONY AVELLA
COUNCIL MEMBER, 19TH DISTRICT
QUEENS

DISTRICT OFFICE:
38-50 BELL BOULEVARD, SUITE C
BAYSIDE, NY 11361
(718) 747-2137
FAX: (718) 747-3105

CITY HALL OFFICE:
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1731
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7250



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March 19, 2007

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

RE: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West

Dear Commissioner Tierney and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment once again on another important New York City landmark.

I am here today to voice my strong opposition to the New York Historical Society's proposed plans to permanently alter its building's façade and to construct a luxury tower.

These changes would not only ruin the character of the building itself, but the tower would radically spoil the unique skyline of Central Park West, between West 76th and 77th Streets, which is host to some of our City's most beautiful and historic treasures. The luxury tower would loom over the building, the American Museum of Natural History and Central Park.

Although I have not had the opportunity to attend some of the local community meetings held on this subject, it is clear that the Society has been less than honest about its plans and intentions. That is truly disgraceful for an organization whose purpose should be to protect the history of New York City. Sadly, it seems the Society is intent on doing the opposite.

Commonly referred to as the only "Triple Crown" landmark in our City, the New York Historical Society building is an individual landmark, part of the Central Park West/West 76th Street Historic District and the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. Therefore, any changes must be carefully weighed and evaluated with the utmost scrutiny.

It would be a travesty if this landmark were allowed to be swept up in the development frenzy currently infecting our City. Temporary development pressures must not allow our heritage and history to be destroyed. It is up to us to protect this building, as well as others, for future generations.

By denying this application, you will send a clear and necessary message to those in the development community who seek to place monetary concerns ahead of vital preservation. Likewise, approving this application would set a very different precedent and the development vultures would quickly descend on every landmark in the City.

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There is only one decision you can make for this City and that is to emphatically deny this application. I urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Avella". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tony Avella
Council Member
District 19—Northeast Queens