

appropriate improvements to landmark sites

Helen has always been honest about her strengths and weaknesses: She's not an architect and aesthetics aren't her specialty. Over the course of her time in office, she has relied on the judgment of the Community Board's Preservation Committee and other preservation-minded community organizations, like LW, in considering her actions on proposals to changes to landmarks and to buildings within historic districts. Sometimes, this has led her to support a well-considered and contextual addition to a landmarked site. This was the case at the American Museum of Natural History, for example. Her push to create the Park Design Working Group was a critical step toward a design for the building and especially for the affected portion of Teddy Roosevelt Park that passed the Community Board nearly unanimously. But it has also led her to vigorously oppose proposals that are inappropriate or out of context for the neighborhood and would unduly affect neighbors. For example, when a group of neighbors on 94th Street reached out to Helen to ask for her help opposing a proposed rear yard addition that would have blocked off light and air from a neighboring building, Helen rose to the challenge. She advised neighbors on how to make their case to the Community Board and, when the Community Board agreed that the proposal was out of context, worked to amplify their concerns before the Landmarks Preservation Commission. While the project was allowed to proceed, it was scaled back significantly.