

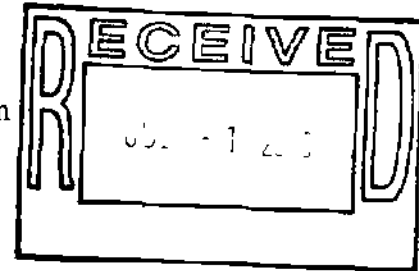
**103 Central Park West Corporation  
101 Central Park West  
New York, NY 10023**

June 27, 2003

**VIA PRIORITY MAIL**

**CERTIFIED - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

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



**Re: Congregation Shearith Israel, Manhattan**

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I am writing pursuant to the request of a unanimous board of directors of the 103 Central Park West Corporation to reaffirm its previously expressed and most strenuous opposition to the proposal of the captioned congregation to build what we now understand is a narrow, 15-story tower on 70th Street adjacent to its synagogue and immediately to the south of our 100-unit cooperative apartment building.

Preliminarily, I wish to express the Board's astonishment and deep disappointment that the Commission has scheduled a hearing on this most controversial proposal two days before the long 4th of July Holiday weekend, when I and many others who oppose this proposal have prior commitments to be elsewhere. We consider this particularly outrageous because it is the second time in less than a year that the Commission has done this: there was a hearing on this proposal set for the Tuesday immediately before the Thanksgiving Day holiday last November. It seems that the proponents and the Commission are quite uninterested in having a full hearing on this proposal, which we understand has been significantly altered since the Commission's last hearing on February 11, 2003.

We understand that the building plan has been modified to make it taller and thinner than originally proposed, but that the total building volume will remain essentially unchanged. If so, it is even more inappropriate to put what is really a "sliver" building in the mid-block area between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue that is nearly 50% taller than any other building in the mid-block portion of that block. Surely, allowing construction of such a building in a historic district makes complete nonsense of the whole concept underlying the creation of such districts.

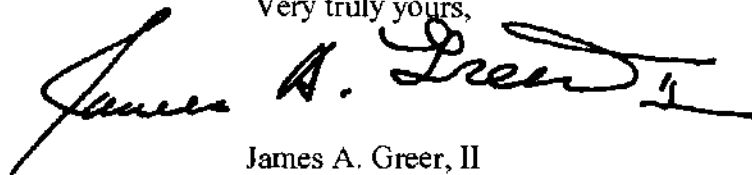
To date we have neither seen nor heard from the representatives of the captioned congregation and valid reason why they should be permitted to impose this inappropriate building on the neighborhood over the vehement objections of the vast majority of those

who will have to live in its immediate vicinity. It appears from the presentations I have heard from the congregation's representatives that they are unwilling to ask their constituents to reach into their own pockets to pay for what I agree is a much-needed new social hall and office space. There certainly has been no demonstration that this very well-to-do congregation lacks the resources for such a project. Absent such a showing, there is no plausible justification for allowing the present plan to proceed.

Under these circumstances, the objections set forth in the February 11, 2003 letter from our then-President George Matouk (copy attached) remain and, if anything, are even more apposite now than they were then. The same is true for the testimony I gave last Fall before the Landmarks Subcommittee of Community Board 7. (See copy attached.)

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully urge you and your commission to dismiss the congregation's present application and recommend that they submit something that responds to their needs for more meeting, classroom and office space without creating an ugly new building that is entirely out of character for the historic district in which it will be located and which will not offend the legitimate sensibilities of its immediate neighbors or seriously undermine the vital concept of historic districts.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James A. Greer, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Greer, II".

James A. Greer, II  
President Emeritus and Director

Atts: (1) February 11, 2003 letter of George Matouk to Hon. Robert B. Tierney

(2) Nov. 21., 2002 testimony of James A. Greer before Landmarks Subcommittee of  
Community Board 7

**103 Central Park West Corporation  
101 Central Park West  
New York, NY 10023**

February 11, 2003

**BY HAND DELIVERY**

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

**Re: Congregation Shearith Israel**

Dear Mr. Tierney:

I am writing in my capacity as President of 103 Central Park West Corporation to express the unanimous opposition of our 9-member Board of Directors, as well as that of a majority of our over 100 tenant-shareholders to the captioned congregation's proposal for a 14-story, 157-foot high tower (plus roof top mechanical equipment) on West 70th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. This proposal, which has been held "inappropriate" by the overwhelming majority of Community Board 7 and its Preservation Sub-Committee, threatens the predominantly low-rise, mid-block character of the Upper West Side, including but not limited to the section of West 70th Street across the street from our building.

I and my fellow directors and, most, if not all, of our fellow tenant-shareholders deeply respect the long, extraordinary history of Congregation Shearith Israel and the contributions it has made and continues to make in the national and international religious community. A majority of our Board has met with the leaders of the Congregation and has sought to reassure them of our respect for them, their institution and the faith they profess. We are also well aware of the importance of preserving their landmark temple, which they have been seeking to restore.

We are also aware of and have no objection to the Congregation's desire to construct a new community center or social hall to replace the existing structure at 8-10 West 70th street and expand it into the Congregation's currently vacant lot adjacent to their current community center. However, as soon as the current plan was announced, we received an unsolicited flood of objections from a majority of our fellow residents, including many whose apartments do not overlook West 70th Street. Only after that did the Board, none of whose views would be obstructed by the proposed structure, vote to oppose the present plan.

We strongly support the existing zoning for the Upper West Side Historic District, which is designed to protect the low-rise character of neighborhood midblocks, and oppose this and all other present and future applications for "block busting" building developments like this one. We are joined in our opposition to this West 70th Street project by a considerable number of elected officials, civic organizations, block associations, and other buildings and coop boards, as well as a growing number of concerned individuals. (See attached list).

I should add that we are not persuaded that the proposal in its present form is necessary to achieve whatever presentation purposes the Congregation is seeking to serve but has yet to spell out with any specificity. We also believe that the massive, proposed structure will not only destroy the character of one of the most beautiful residential blocks on the Upper West Side, but that it will overwhelm the existing landmark temple with consequent diminution in its considerable beauty.

Accordingly, I and my fellow directors urge you and your fellow commissioners to do all in your power to preserve and protect our community by opposing as vigorously as possible this ill-conceived project and all other such projects that require waivers of existing zoning requirements and threaten to destroy our community's unique character. I am enclosing 20 copies of this letter and its attachment, which I hope will be sufficient to provide a copy for each member of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and for your principal staff members.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



George Matouk

President

103 Central Park West Corporation

Att.: List of Opponents (partial)

Encls. (20)

cc: Board of Directors - 103 Central Park West Corporation  
Janice Negrin - Insignia Residential Group