

FRIENDS



OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT'S

20 East 69th Street New York, New York 10021
(212) 535-2526 Fax (212) 535-2155
info@friends-ues.org
www.friends-ues.org

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November 26, 2002

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS HEARING TESTIMONY BY LISA KERSAVAGE

Re 03-2628- Block 36, 37, lot 1122, 8 West 70th Street - Congregation Shearith Israel
Synagogue - Individual Landmark, Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Madam Chair, Honorable Commissioners,

FRIENDS is testifying on this issue because both the East and West Sides share a common and precious characteristic, low rise mid-blocks of residential buildings. This building pattern is essential to preserve in order to maintain the sense of place of both neighborhoods.

This proposal to build a 14-story building on a mid-block is egregiously inappropriate. In order to receive a modification of the use and bulk regulations under Section 74-711, the Landmarks Preservation Commission must find that the bulk of the modifications relate harmoniously to the landmark building or buildings in the Historic District. It is eminently clear that the proposed 14-story building is not harmonious to the landmarked synagogue itself, nor to the dominant character of the mid-blocks in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. Off the Avenue, West 70th Street, like most of the mid-blocks on the Upper West Side, is made up primarily of 4-6 story rowhouses.

FRIENDS feels that inappropriateness alone warrants a denial of this application.

Please deny this application.



THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

1 CENTRAL STREET, 9TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7923 FAX: 212-669-7797<http://nyc.gov.landmarks>

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11/26 12:02 1Item # 9/10 Item Address _____

_____ In favor of proposal ☒ Against proposal _____ Other position

THOMAS GIER

Name

101 Central Park West

Address

Representing _____

If you would rather leave a statement, complete and return to the Reception Desk, or mail the form to the Commission at the above address, attention: Diane Jackier, Director of Community and Government Affairs.

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # _____ Item Address _____

_____ In favor of proposal X Against proposal _____ Other position _____

JONATHAN BAKER
Name

31 W. 69 ST 1-B NYC 10023
Address

Sidmar Property Corp.
Representing

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THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEETDate 11 / 26 / 02Item # _____ Item Address 5-hearthe ISRAEL

_____ In favor of proposal ☒ Against proposal _____ Other position _____

BOB MATISON
Name

300 CENTRAL PARK WEST
Address

SELF
Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 25 / 02Item # _____ Item Address Sheep Hill / Isaac (Lehman) Apt

_____ In favor of proposal ☒ _____ Against proposal _____ Other position _____

Deborah Snyder Platt
Name

91 Central Park West 7F
Address

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02Item # _____ Item Address 8 W 70th

_____ In favor of proposal _____ Against proposal _____ Other position

Francis Daniel

Name

18 W 70th St.

Address

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 28 / 02Item # 94.17 Item Address 10 W 70th ST

_____ In favor of proposal ☒ _____ Against proposal _____ Other position _____

MYLES WEINTRAUB

Name

18 WEST 70th ST NY NY 10023

Address

18 W 70th ST SELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEETDate 11 / 26 / 02Item # _____ Item Address Congregation Shearith Israel_____ In favor of proposal X Against proposal _____ Other position _____Dana Miller

Name

110 West 90th St. #26 NYC 10024

Address

Representing _____

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEETDate 11/23/2002Item # _____ Item Address CS/ 14-story tower

_____ In favor of proposal / Against proposal _____ Other position

FON PRINCE

Name

18 W 70TH, NYC 10023

Address

Representing _____

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEETDate Dec 1, 27, 02Item # _____ Item Address 70th St Condo Tower

_____ In favor of proposal X _____ Against proposal _____ Other position

Michael M. FSL*Name*111 E. 10th St NY 10003*Address**Representing*

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN-IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 AND 10

Address 8 WEST 70TH STREET

☒ In favor of Proposal

☐ Against Proposal

☐ Unsure of Position

Please Print:

GABRIEL GOLDSTEIN

Name

50 EAST 72ND ST - 3A

Address

MYSELF

Representing

If you would rather leave a statement, complete and return to the Reception Desk, or mail the form to the Commission at the above address -- Attention: Terri Rosen Deutsch, Chief of Staff

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TOTAL P 02



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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN-IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 AND 10

Address 8 WEST 70TH STREET

☒ In favor of Proposal

☐ Against Proposal

☐ Unsure of Position

Please Print

Suzanne Stern
Name

21 East 22 St NYC 10010
Address

MYSELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN-IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 AND 10

Address 8 WEST 70TH STREET

☒ In favor of Proposal

☐ Against Proposal

☐ Unsure of Position

Please Print:

Naumi Doudavany

Name

305 W 70th Street

Address

MYSELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 & 10 Item Address 8 W 70TH ST.

☒ In favor of proposal ☐ Against proposal ☐ Other position

JEFFREY MOSCER

Name

8 W. 70TH ST. NEW YORK NY. 10023

Address

SELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN-IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 AND 10

Address 8 WEST 70TH STREET

☒ In favor of Proposal

☐ Against Proposal

☐ Unsure of Position

Please Print

GLORIA MOSSER

Name

351 EAST 84TH ST

NY 10028

Address

MYSELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 25 / 02Item # _____ Item Address Shearsh Israel Luxury apt.

_____ In favor of proposal X _____ Against proposal _____ Other position _____

Name James PlattAddress 91 Central Park West 7F

Representing _____

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Date 11 / 26 / 02

Item # 9 AND 10

Address 8 WEST 70TH STREET

☒ In favor of Proposal

☐ Against Proposal

☐ Unsure of Position

Please Print:

Terri Rosen Deutsch
Name
11 West 70th Street, Apt 10
Address

MYSELF

Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 26 / 02Item # 910 Item Address 3 W 70th

 In favor of proposal Against proposal 1 Other position

Jerome Mantowski
Name

91 CW
Address

91 CW Corp.
Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11/26/02

Item # _____ Item Address _____

_____ In favor of proposal _____ Against proposal ☒ _____ Other position _____Robert Wright
Name6 West 77 St
AddressMember, NY Historical Society, Museum,President, Friends of Museum Park Committee
Representing

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PUBLIC HEARING SPEAKERS' SIGN IN SHEET

Date 11 / 24 / 02 CPLC 70th StItem # _____ Item Address Portuguese Syn.

In favor of proposal _____ Against proposal ☒ Other position _____
Carol Blake

Name _____
91 Central Park W
 Address _____

Representing _____

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Date 15 / 2nd / 1975

Item # 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 Item Address 2

_____ In favor of proposal _____ Against proposal _____ Other position _____

Sandwich

Name

232. 1. 10.

Address

126

Representing

If you would rather leave a statement, complete and return to the Reception Desk, or mail the form to the Commission at the above address, attention: Diane Jackier, Director of Community and Government Affairs.

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Norman Marcus
November 26, 2002

The Upper West Side – Central Park West Historic District and
The Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue

A harbinger of importance to the Upper West Side – Central Park West Historic District is before you. It is the request by the Central Park West Shearith Israel Congregation to permit within the Historic District a midblock 14-story structure containing 10 residential condominium floors. It seeks to shift its development potential away from the historic Central Park West “wall” into the vulnerable underbelly of the District, its characteristic brownstone/limestone midblocks. This request was unanimously rejected by The Landmarks Committee of Community Board No. 7 last Thursday night as “inappropriate” and unworthy of receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

It is a harbinger because there are at least a half dozen institutions waiting to apply the precedent: The Ethical Culture Society, The Holy Lutheran Church, The Second Church of Christ Scientist, The Universalist Church, The New York Historical Society, The Museum of Natural History, and The First Church of Christ Scientist. In all of these cases we have significant, underbuilt structures which punctuate the historic Central Park West wall – and which help define the shape of the District.

Because these structures are individually landmarked or significant contributors to the Historic District, they are protected unless hardship claims can be substantiated by them. To the extent these are charitable or religious properties, the ability to fulfill their charitable or religious purpose defines their reasonable investment-backed expectations as property owners. Commercial exploitation of their unused zoning potential is neither a “right” of these institutions, nor does it promote the character of its surrounding Historic District.

The Congregation in this case proposes to demolish its low rise school and open space used at a midblock scale and replace it with a tower three times its height. The midblock on the north side of 70th Street – where the new tower’s shadow will fall – stands entirely at brownstone scale. The south side has however within its brownstone rows, two pre-war 9-story buildings.

The historic district report of the Landmarks Preservation Commission traces the evolution of the district and remarks on the survival of so many 19th Century brownstone blocks. The two 9-story multiple dwellings which replaced isolated brownstones in these midblocks did not become the “new” midblock look as they did in much of the Bronx. The proposed 14-story structure will tower mightily over the brownstones and over the 9-story apartments from the 1920’s as well. It’s as if a Central Park West building, denied its usual location, migrated around the corner to the midblock.

A Certificate of Appropriateness application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (“LPC”) in a Historic District must be judged against its historic context. Measured against the built form of the 70th Street midblock, or the midblocks within the entire historic district, the proposed 14-story tower is a visitor from another planet; it has no place on this midblock. Nor

can it be seen as a setback part of the Central Park West wall of the Historic District since it is more than 100 feet west of this wall. By all common sense, historic and zoning criteria, the 14-story proposal sits in the West 70th Street midblock, as defined by the land use public policy of the community and the city. Because its sponsor is a nearby designated landmark does not change the criteria LPC must apply to the proposal. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to financially benefit a landmark at the cost of the Historic District. Architectural "appropriateness" is not transformed by a multi-million dollar real estate contribution to the designated landmark.

This proposal is modest only in comparison with the synagogue's earlier 42-story incarnation. It destroys the scale of 70th Street. It fills in one of the characteristic dips in the CPW historic skyline. It gratuitously bottles up the inner courtyard of 18 West 70th Street above the zoning and historic height limit of the area. I can't rationalize these impacts just because of the economic advantage to the CPW property owner, the respected historic Spanish-Portuguese synagogue.

**Executive Director**

Andrew Berman

President

F. Anthony Zimino III

Vice-PresidentsElizabeth Flv
Arthur Levin
Arbie Thalerker**Secretary/Treasurer**

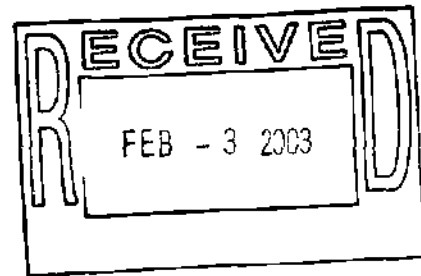
Katherine Schoenmoser

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Vicki Weiner
Dorinda Winkelman
Fred Winstow
Linda Yowell**Advisors**Kent Barsick
Joan K. Davidson
Christopher Forbes
Shelly Freeman
Margaret Halsey Cardner
Margot Cavle
Elizabeth Calmore
Carol Grotzer
John Guare
Judy Hiss
Martin Hutter
John Jay Iselin
Regina M. Kellerman
Miriam L. Lee
Kendal Monroe
Joshiko Mori
James Ortunzio
James Stewart Polshuk
Stephen Raphael
Julie Rinaldi
Henry Lopez Reed
Alice B. Sandler
Verna Small
Calvin Trillin
Jean Claude van Itallie
Anni Marie Wiener Summer
Anthony C. Wood

*Established in 1980 to protect the
cultural and architectural heritage
of Greenwich Village.*

January 16, 2003

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



Dear Chair Tierney:

I am writing in regard to Congregation Shearith Israel's 14-story, 157-foot tall tower (not including rooftop mechanicals) proposed for the midblock of West 70th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. Construction of such a tower would require the granting of several waivers, variances, and special permits exempting the new structure from the current existing zoning and other regulations designed to encourage compatibility between new construction and the existing context of low-rise rowhouses on residential sidestreets, as well as entail the demolition of a structure currently afforded landmark protections.

GVSHHP is very concerned about the precedent which approval of such a project would set. We strongly believe that contextual zoning and zoning which has been crafted to ensure design compatibility in historic neighborhoods should be strengthened and protected, rather than weakened. We also feel strongly that proposals involving the demolition of structures within landmark districts and exemptions from existing zoning must be held to the highest standards to ensure they are approved only in cases of utmost necessity, as the least onerous path possible, and that the results will not impact negatively upon the integrity of their surroundings. It is unclear to us how this standard has been met with this proposal.

Thus GVSHHP joins Manhattan Community Board #7, the Municipal Art Society, Historic Districts Council, Landmark West!, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, New York State Senators Thomas Duane and Eric Schneiderman and New York State Assemblymembers Richard Gottfried and Scott Stringer and a growing list of others in opposition to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Michael Bloomberg
City Planning Commission Chair Amanda Burden
Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields
New York State Senator Thomas K. Duane
New York State Senator Eric Schneiderman
City Council Member Gale Brewer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
New York State Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
New York State Assemblyman Scott Stringer
Arlene Simon, President, Landmark West!

Robert J Jacobson Jr
91 Central Park West
New York City,
NY
10023

Mr. Robert Tierney
Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Center Street
9th Floor
New York City,
NY 10007

Dear Mr. Tierney:

I am writing this letter to vigorously oppose Congregation Shearith Israel's proposed construction of a 15 story tower atop its "community" house on West 70th St., (the reality being this "community" house is not for the community, but for themselves!!). To allow this tower to happen would fly in the face of all the preservation laws now in place and not only most negatively affect this neighborhood's architectural harmony but anywhere else in the city as well. If this developers' dream but community's nightmare goes forward, it will not at all fit in with the already harmonious style of this area ...and once again, if allowed here then it will be "carte blanche" for any developer in the city to invade a neighborhood and do the same and therefore break the preservation laws for which they were designed.

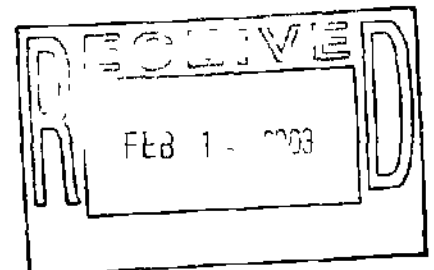
This proposed building is grossly out of scale and totally conflicts with the nature of this historic upper Westside district.

For this Congregation to build a new community house is quite admirable; but I don't think this tower above should become CSI's profit center at the expense of this lovely upper Westside neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and in advance, for listening to me.

Most Sincerely,


Robert J. Jacobson, Jr.



CIVITAS

A Union of Citizens

1457 Lexington Avenue New York NY 10128-2506

Founder

August Heckscher
1914 1997

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28 January 2003

Hon. Robert B. Tierney
Chair NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10005

Re: Proposal of Congregation Shearith Israel, 8 West 70th Street

Dear Chairman Tierney:

CIVITAS, an over 22 year old Upper East Side and East Harlem zoning and planning organization is on record for supporting and upholding R8B mid-block zoning regulations.

CIVITAS is appreciative of the needs of institutions for expansion and believes that needed growth is possible while still respecting the spirit of R8B.

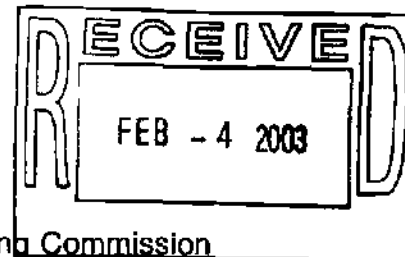
The present application, with requests for significant variances, violates the mid-block context, which many communities throughout the city have fought to establish and uphold.

CIVITAS urges that the Commission reject this application because of the adverse effect it will have on the mid-block and because of the precedent it will set for future applications.

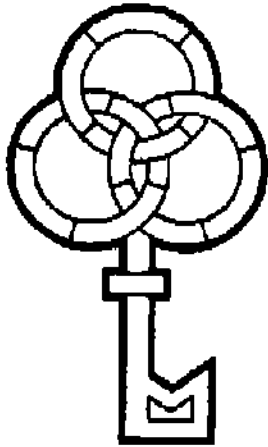
Sincerely yours,

Genie Rice

Genie Rice, President



cc: Amanda Burden, Chairman City Planning Commission
C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President



KEY DESIGN & RESTORATION

DECORATIVE ARCHITECTURAL
GLASS - WOOD - METAL

Date *2/10/03*

Attention---- *Robert B. Tierney*

From---- *W 89 St Block assn*

Regarding---- *proposed tower on W 70 St.*

Page # 1 of 2 pages

If there is a problem with Fax transmission or if you require further information, please contact me at (212)-787-9326.

Feb-10-03 03:17P wasa

2125299079www.protectwest70.org01

THE FINE ARTS FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

National Academy of Design
New York Chapter of the American
Institute of Architects
The Architectural League of New York
Municipal Art Society
Van Alen Institute
National Sculpture Society
National Society of Mural Painters
Brooklyn Chapter of the American
Institute of Architects
The Associates of the Art Commission
Historic Districts Council



FOUNDED 1895

FineArtsFed@aol.com

New York Chapter of the American
Society of Landscape Architects
New York Metropolitan Chapter of the
American Society of Interior Designers
American Abstract Artists
Sculptors Guild
New York Metropolitan Chapter of the
American Planning Association
New Yorkers for Parks
New York Artists Equity Association,
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Regina Stewart, *Consultant*

February 10, 2003

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

Dear Mr. Tierney,

The Fine Arts Federation urges the Landmarks Commission to disapprove the application for a 14-story building behind the landmark Shearith Israel synagogue on West 70th Street. The building's height and design are inappropriate for the synagogue and for the historic district. The Fine Arts Federation, founded in 1895, is an association of 20 arts organizations dedicated to fostering and protecting the artistic interests of New York City.

A 14-story building will loom over the low-rise Beaux Arts style synagogue, detracting from its silhouette and visual impact on Central Park West. As our past president Giorgio Cavaglieri points out, Central Park West is a unique avenue, with Central Park on one side and on the other side a mix of tall apartment buildings and low-rise institutional buildings, like the synagogue and the New York Historical Society. A 14-story apartment building so close to the synagogue and to Central Park West will alter that historic and scenic streetscape.

Feb-10-03 03:17P wasa

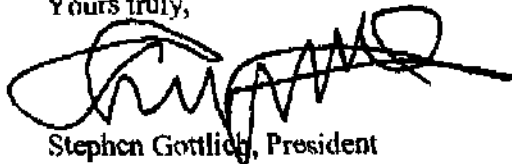
2125299079 www.protectwest70.org 2

Fine Arts Federation
2/10/03 Shearith Israel Letter
Page 2

The low-rise row houses on the side streets in Upper West Side/Central Park West historic district are a key feature of the district. While West 70th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue is not monolithically low-rise, the proposed 14-story building is much higher than any other building on the block and than the typical side street profile.

The present design of the proposed building does not relate to the base, materials, and fenestration of the synagogue and inappropriately moves the entrance.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Gottlieb', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Gottlieb, President

FEB-10-1903 16:18 FROM

TO

12126697960 P.01
www.protectwest70.org

Monday, February 10, 2003

Mr. Robert B. Tierney, Chairman
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Center Street, 9th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Re: The Proposal of Congregation Shearith Israel to build a 14 story tower 8 West 70th Street

Dear Chairman Tierney:

I am a principal partner at Siris/Coombs Architects, an architectural firm which has made the Upper West Side it's home for the past 25 years. I am writing to express my strong opposition to a proposal for a 14-story, 157-foot tower on West 70th Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue. This proposal, which has been submitted to the New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, threatens the prevalent low-rise midblock character of the Upper West Side and, if approved, would pave the way for other architecturally incompatible projects.

I am a strong supporter of the existing zoning for the Upper West Side Historic District, which is designed to protect the low-rise character of neighborhood midblocks, and I oppose all present and future applications for overscaled and inappropriate building developments such as this one.

Westsiders like myself are joined in our opposition to the West 70th Street project by Manhattan Community Board #7, the Municipal Art Society, Historic Districts Council, Landmark West! and Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, as well as a growing list of individuals and local and citywide groups. Elected officials supporting this effort to disapprove this development include Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, New York State Senators Thomas Duane and Eric Schneiderman and New York State Assemblymembers Richard Gottfried and Scott Stringer, all of whom oppose this project because it violates the zoning and undermines the character of the historic district.

I am urging you to do everything in your power to help preserve and protect our community by opposing this ill-conceived project and all other projects that threaten to disrupt our community's character by waiving existing zoning.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Coombs, AIA
Siris/Coombs Architects
2112 Broadway, Suite 405
New York, NY 10024

2112 BROADWAY NEW YORK NY 10024 212 580 1220 FX 212 580 8910
PETER COOMBS AIA JANE SIRIS AIA
siriscoombs@aol.com



Heather McCracken
02/11/2003 10:25 AM

To: Diane Jackier/Lpc@Lpc
cc:
Subject: Proposal by Shearith Israel for Zoning Variance

----- Forwarded by Heather McCracken/Lpc on 02/11/2003 10:27 AM -----



"Elizabeth Mayers"
<emayers@nyc.rr.com>
>

To: <rtierney@lpc.nyc.gov>
cc:
Subject: Proposal by Shearith Israel for Zoning Variance

02/11/2003 12:40 AM

ELIZABETH G. MAYERS
25 CENTRAL PARK WEST, APT. 3I
NEW YORK, NY 10023
212.541.9287

February 10, 2003

Robert B. Tierney
Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair
1 Centre Street, 8th Floor
New York, NY

Dear Mr. Tierney:

I am writing to express my dismay at the possibility of a variance, applied for by Congregation Shearith Israel on West 70th Street. The proposed 14-story building would represent a flagrant exception to existing zoning, resulting in an inappropriate intrusion into this carefully crafted contextual zone. As you know, the R8B zoning prevents such large structures from rising above the surrounding brownstones and other low buildings. It is astonishing that anyone would consider that the zoning, which was created after much deliberation in 1984, should be scrapped for this project, opening precedents for further destruction of this R8B zone.

My extended family has had a long relationship with Shearith Israel. My husband's uncle, Harry Bernstein, held the honorary position of custodian of Shearith Israel's cemetery in lower Manhattan for many years, and the family was in the congregation of this august synagogue for two generations. He lived at 25 Central Park West, where I live, and he was always concerned with the character of the area and proud of Shearith Israel as a beautiful and elegant edifice to which he made many contributions. In the current circumstances I feel certain that this relative of ours, whom we remember for his concern for the neighborhood where he had chosen to live, would have encouraged other members of the congregation to play by the existing rules. That was who he was, and given his well-known sense of humor and the esteem in which he was held by his friends and associates, I imagine that he would have been pretty successful at persuading others.

Despite my respect for this institution and the meaning it has had for so many generations of Jewish New Yorkers, I hope that the R8B zoning will not be waived for this building which will so markedly diminish the Upper West Side Historic District.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Mayers



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

822 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248
Tel: 518-453-4941 Fax: 518-455-5939

25 Broadway, Rm. 2232w York, NY 10007
Tel: 212-312-1492 Fax: 212-312-1494
E-mail: Gottfr@assembly.state.ny.us

Richard N. Gottfried
84th Assembly District

Chair
Committee on Health

COMMITTEES
Rules
Health
Higher Education
Insurance
Judiciary
Social Services
Majority Steering

November 13, 2002

Sherida Paulsen, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street
New York, NY 10007
BY FAX AND BY MAIL

Re: Congregation Shearith Israel
8 West 70th Street

Dear Ms. Paulsen:

We are writing to ask the Commission to postpone the hearing on Congregation Shearith Israel (The Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue), scheduled for November 26

The Commission's schedule for the public hearing on this project means that Community Board 7 will not be able to participate in the hearing, because the Board will not be considering the proposal until its full board meeting on December 3. There are significant concerns about the proposal, including whether the development serves a preservation purpose and whether it would set bad precedent for zoning and development in historic districts. Shearith Israel has been working with the City on this project for two years, without any word to the community. It is wrong for it to now to seek to rush through the public review process. The community's voice must be heard.

Shearith Israel (CSI) has proposed to build a 14-story (159-foot) building on its property at 8 West 70th Street. The synagogue itself is a landmarked building, and is located within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District. In order to proceed with this development, CSI must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, as well as a waiver from the City Planning Commission or the Board of Standards and Appeals.

We urge you to postpone the date of this hearing until after December 3, so that the Commission will be able to consider the opinion of Community Board 7 in making its decision on this matter.

Very truly yours,

Thomas K. Duane
Thomas K. Duane
State Senator

Richard N. Gottfried
Richard N. Gottfried
Assembly Member

Gale Brewer
Gale Brewer
Councilmember

cc: Community Board 7
Historic Districts Council
Landmark West!
Municipal Arts Society
Congregation Shearith Israel
Various local co-ops and residents

To: DJ

CHRISTOS INC.
241 WEST 37th STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10018
www.christosbridal.com
TEL: (212) 921-0025
FAX: (212) 921-0127

November 22, 2002

Ms. Sherida Paulsen
Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair

Dear Ms. Paulsen,

Community Board 7 Landmarks Committee held a hearing last night regarding Congregation Shearith Israel's plans to construct a 14 story tower in a designated historic district.

The local residents turned out in force to oppose the towers construction which will destroy the character of the neighborhood.

Congregation Shearith Israel can meet the needs of its growing membership by constructing a six story building where it plans to build the tower. Under current laws a six story structure is permissible. Shearith Israel is abusing its non-profit status by attempting to gain a "special permit" so it can cash out on the 10 condominiums.

The congregation should do what other congregations do when money is needed. Ask its members to contribute to meet its future financial needs. Shearith Israel is a wealthy congregation capable of raising the funds required. The money can be put into a trust and used to repair and maintain the historic synagogue and build its community center.

To permit the 14 story tower to be constructed destroys the integrity of the Landmarks Law and betrays the trust residents expect from its elected officials and community representatives.

The community will attend the Landmarks Preservation Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 26th, to express its opposition to the 14 story tower.

Reject the construction of the condominium in our neighborhood. Protect the land marked Central Park West skyline and the historic brownstone mid-blocks.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Michael DeCuollo
Homeowner @ 91 CPW

To: DJ

Sherida Paulsen
Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair

November 20, 2002

VIA FAX
212-669-7960

Re: Congregation Shearith

Dear Chair Paulsen,

As a resident of 91 Central Park West, Upper West Side, and a member of the design community, I vehemently oppose the development of the proposed condominium tower!

The historic district in which I live acclaims Landmark status. With the brownstones, and the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, the entire community of 69th and 70th streets will be impacted. The Landmark Law was established to protect these buildings and the development of this "special-permit", threatens the architectural integrity of our city.

Please decline any and all requests to develop this site on West 70th Street.

Sincerely,



Lois M. LeBlanc

Stuart & Naomi Paley
101 Central Park West
New York, NY 10023

To: DJ

November 20, 2002

Honorable Sherida Paulsen
Landmarks Preservation Committee
City of New York
New York, NY

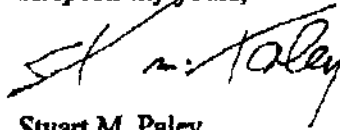
Dear Ms. Paulsen,

Congregation Shearith Israel, located on Central Park West and 70th Street, is rushing a major community change through the planning process. It has just disclosed a plan to erect a midblock condominium tower for which it is trying to get approvals and permits. They have done this in such a way as to deny the very vehement opposition of the local community a reasonable time to make a complete and effective presentation to both the Landmarks Commission and the Community Planning Board.

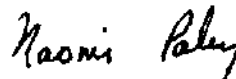
It is unfair, unethical and indeed reprehensible that this wealthy congregation, already favored by its tax-exempt status, should seek the further privilege of exemption from the protection of an historic district in order to enrich itself at the expense of the community. Moreover, should they prevail, their success could well be used for the destruction of similar neighborhoods throughout the city.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Respectfully yours,



Stuart M. Paley



Naomi Paley

To: DJ

November 20th, 2002

Ms. Shenda Paulsen
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Fax number 212 669-7960

Dear Ms. Paulsen:

I am writing in regards to Congregation Shearith Israel's plan to construct a 14-story condominium tower on West 70th Street, on the mid-block west of Central Park West

Having been a resident of West 70th Street for over thirty years and currently being a working mother raising my six year old daughter here, I am extremely concerned about how this structure will adversely affect not only our block, but also the entire neighborhood

Allowing the proposed tower to be built would severely compromise the integrity and character of both the Landmarks Law and of the Upper West Side / Central Park West Historic District. The tower will also compromise the beauty and stature of Congregation Shearith Israel's own Landmark synagogue

I urge you to help deny all of the special permits, waivers, variance and zoning provisions that building this tower would require. These special waivers and variances are being requested by a non-profit organization for a project that is clearly intended for profit.

In addition to causing irreparable damage to the immediate neighborhood, compromising the Landmarks Law this time could set an ugly precedent for exploitation of other sites and a continuing degradation of the beauty and historical nature of the entire Central Park West / Upper West Side District

Please help protect both the Landmarks Law and our landmarked neighborhoods

Thank you for giving this matter your full attention

Most sincerely yours,



Susanne S. Rostock
18 West 70th Street
New York, NY 10023

Sherida Paulsen

11/25/2002 02:40 PM

To: Diane Jackier/Lpc@Lpc

cc:

Subject: Against Portuguese Synagogue's proposal to erect building on W.70th St.

----- Forwarded by Sherida Paulsen/Lpc on 11/25/2002 02:41 PM -----



PaulAvr@aol.com

11/25/2002 01:59 PM

To: spaulsen@lpc.nyc.gov

cc:

Subject: Against Portuguese Synagogue's proposal to erect building on W.70th St.

Dear LPC Chair Paulsen:

On November 21, the Landmarks Committee of CB 7 voted unanimously to recommend denial of Congregation Shearith Israel's proposal to erect a building on W. 70th Street. Such a building would be devastating to the area and set a bad precedent for future such proposals.

I hope the Landmarks Preservation Commission will deny the proposal and preserve this area.

Ina Avrighi
425 Riverside Drive
NYC 10025

www.protectwest70.org

Sherida Paulsen

11/26/2002 09:05 AM

To: Diane Jackier/Lpc@Lpc

cc.

Subject: DO NOT PERMIT 14 STORY W. 70 STREET BUILDING

----- Forwarded by Sherida Paulsen/Lpc on 11/26/2002 09:06 AM -----



**"DAEDALUS
PRODUCTIONS, INC."**
<info@rosenblumphoto.org>

11/25/2002 05:05 PM

To: <spaulsen@lpc.nyc.gov>

cc: <gale.brewer@council.nyc.ny.us>, <bp@manhattanbp.org>,
<mgnysa@aol.com>, <strings@assembly.state.ny.us>,
<duane@senate.state.ny.us>

Subject: DO NOT PERMIT 14 STORY W. 70 STREET BUILDING

TO: THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
FROM: NINA AND DANIEL ALLENTUCK, 15 West 70 Street, NY NY 10023

Dear Sherida Paulsen:

Please uphold the integrity of the Landmarks Law, and protect our beloved landmarked Central Park West skyline and the Historic District brownstones in our neighborhood. We live directly across the street from the proposed site and we vehemently protest the proposed building that is planned to be put up next to Congregation Shearith Israel on 70th Street and urge you NOT to grant waivers or variances or special permits that will allow this completely illegal building to be built.

Allowing this illegal building to go forward will set a dangerous precedent for our neighborhood as other sites held by non-profit institutions will also try to put up outlawed buildings that will allow the historical character of the neighborhood to be destroyed. Please vote against allowing the construction of a mid-block building twice as tall as the law permits. Do NOT allow the air rights to be shifted across a zoning boundary, nor waive the zoning laws. Please protect the neighborhood and its landmark status, which is the job of your Commission.

Respectfully submitted,
Nina Rosenblum Allentuck

Ron Prince

Marketing Consultant

18 West 70th Street

Penthouse A

New York, NY 10023

ronprince@worldnet.att.net

212 579 9160 voice

212 579 9158 fax

November 18, 2002

To: Sherida E. Paulsen
LPC Chair

Fax: 669-7960

3 pages (including this cover page)

Ron Prince

Marketing Consultant

18 West 70th Street

Penthouse A

New York, NY 10023

ronprince@worldnet.att.net

212.579.9160 voice

212.579.9160 fax

November 18, 2002

Sherida E. Paulsen, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street
9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Paulsen:

I am writing you about a very important issue in preservation – and to appeal for your support.

As you know, Congregation Shearith Israel (CSI) is seeking approval to build a 14-story structure on West 70th Street, behind their landmark building on 70th & CPW. The building would be on the site of CSI's current community house plus an adjoining, now-vacant lot. Four above-ground floors would house new community facilities; ten more would go to luxury condos.

If built, this structure would tower over a quintessential block in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District.

The waivers, variances and special permits this scheme requires are of themselves telling of the project's inappropriateness. They include:

- o The transfer of air rights from the CSI's landmark building to the site behind it – a precedent and a dangerous one!
- o The transfer of air rights across zoning districts – the synagogue (on higher-rising CPW) and the proposed building site (reaching well into residential West 70th) are in different zones.
- o Waiver of zoning law in order to allow a building twice the legal height. (The current design is approximately 75% higher than the now-tallest mid-block structure.)
- o Waiver of "rear yard" and "set back" provisions.

Letter to Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Shonda E. Paulsen
November 18, 2002
Page 2 of 2

All this in a designated historic district!

The synagogue maintains that the sale of the development rights will endow its own preservation and other programs. But opening the door to special-permit development by not-for-profits endangers historic areas throughout our city.

There really is a question of policy here – and of appropriateness:

Should an organization with an historic site be permitted to expand to the great detriment of an historic district? The answer should be no, even for institutions of worship.

This is a high-stakes case: The integrity of the Landmark Law and of this (and other) historic districts need protection. Please use your voice and prestige to ensure that a building plan of extremely inappropriate scale is defeated.

I look forward to your hearings on this proposal next week, on November 26th.

Sincerely,

