



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

August 17, 2009

Mr. John Sexton
President
New York University
70 Washington Square, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10003

Re: Construction at 133-136 MacDougal Street

Dear President Sexton:

On late Friday afternoon my office received troubling news regarding the removal of a portion of the northern theater wall at 133-135 MacDougal Street. As you are aware, the University's commitment to preserving the structural walls, volume and footprint of the theater throughout construction was paramount in my decision to endorse the University's redevelopment proposal.


According to the e-mail sent by the University, a portion of the wall was removed due to structural instability. While such action may have been unavoidable, I am outraged that the University did not pause to consult with the community board and task force before proceeding. Given that much of the public support for this project hinged on the University's commitment to preserve these walls, it is appalling that their condition was withheld from the community for several weeks. Last summer's community consultation process for this project was marked by responsiveness and open dialogue. I am disappointed that in this instance the University chose to follow a path more indicative of the "old NYU", and not the responsible institution that has emerged in recent years.

Since the adoption of the Planning Principles, NYU has embarked on a new path of transparency and dialogue with neighbors. The University's intergovernmental team regularly provides updates at community board meetings and last year established a user friendly construction website to share information regarding ongoing projects. These acts highlight the positive effects that community discussions have had on University policy. I am hopeful that this is the NYU that we will encounter as construction proceeds at this site.

I am requesting that the University immediately halt all theater related construction at the site, except as necessary to ensure its structural stability, until a full briefing on the extent of the damage is provided to Community Board 2 and the Task Force and assurances are made that previous commitments will be honored.

We must not forget that the University's improved public relations have been the result of sustained dialogue with the community. As the University prepares to deliver its long-awaited master planning document, maintaining such regular and proactive communication is a must. Anything less is unacceptable.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer