



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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November 19, 2010

John Sexton, President
New York University
70 Washington Square South, rm. 1216
New York, NY 10012

**Re: Failure to Maintain Commitments re: Provincetown Playhouse
Theater Restoration**

Dear President Sexton:

I write regarding NYU's recently announced re-opening of the Provincetown Playhouse Theater. As you know, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation was a vocal critic of NYU's plan to demolish 94% of the original Provincetown Playhouse and Apartments building, though we acknowledged that NYU's commitment, after much public outcry, to maintain the four walls of the small black box theater space was at least an improvement over the university's original plan to demolish everything except the façade of the theater entrance.

As you also know, we were deeply disturbed when we discovered and exposed that NYU had violated this pledge and had in fact demolished a significant portion of the historic walls of the theater. In fact, there was general outrage in response to this revelation, as this was one of the very few pieces of the original building and theater which NYU agreed to preserve, and one of the promises NYU made about the plan which received support from Borough President Stringer and Community Board #2, and acquiescence from several other elected officials.

Now, however, it seems that NYU has also broken one of its other pledges regarding the Provincetown Playhouse, to preserve and re-use one of the few remaining historic pieces of the theater, the end pieces of the theater seat rows. These were one of the few remaining historic pieces of the theater which NYU had not removed or destroyed during its twenty-plus year ownership of the theater. In spite of several explicit commitments by NYU officials that that these historic pieces of the theater would be preserved and re-used within the theater's seating area (see attached), that promise now appears to have been broken as well (see attached photos).

With the breaking of this pledge, there is now virtually nothing left of the pre-demolition or historic theater in this space, making NYU's pronouncements that it has "preserved" the Provincetown Playhouse ring completely hollow. Unfortunately, the ongoing failure of NYU to maintain even its most basic commitments to the public regarding its development plans serves only to

diminish the university's credibility and further strain relationships with its neighbors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Community Action Alliance on NYU 2031
Community Board #2



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Alicia D. Hurley, Ph.D. *Vice-President*

February 1, 2010

Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Borough President Stringer,

On December 17th, members from the Borough President's Task Force on NYU Development met with the construction and design team for the Law School project at 133-139 MacDougal. The meeting was convened to give an update on the construction as well as solicit feedback on the current design of the theater. Additionally, we discussed ideas regarding how best to relay the rich cultural history of the site in a playhouse lobby exhibit.

Our historical consultant presented an overview of the history of the Provincetown Playhouse and was followed by representatives from the primary users of the space, the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, who discussed the cultural and academic programming for the theater. Finally, our architect led a discussion featuring a design overview of the theater and opportunities for integrating the history of the Playhouse into the new design.

Task Force members expressed an interest in exposing as much of the original walls as possible rather than covering them with plaster or sheetrock as they were prior to construction. This request will be accommodated.

We also received feedback regarding the front doors of the Playhouse which had various finishes over the years. At the request of the Task Force members, the mahogany doors will be painted white, which is consistent with what is shown in many of the historic photographs.

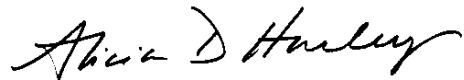
While the chair upholstery changed many times over the years, the end pieces of the chairs, which appear to be from the 1940's, are being preserved and fastened to the end of each row of seating. In addition, the façade will be cleaned and restored at the end of construction. Specifically, the signage and lighting will replicate the historic design, and the "Oculi," which are now light boxes, will be restored.

The new lobby ceiling is inspired by the Kuppelhorizont dome, a stage feature that was removed from the theater in one of its many renovations. These proposals were also met with the approval of Task Force members.

Finally, Task Force members provided a variety of suggestions regarding the historical display planned for the playhouse lobby that will present information and imagery commemorating the history of the space.

We greatly appreciate the participation of Task Force members with this project and look forward to inviting you to the re-opening of the Provincetown Playhouse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia D. Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Alicia D. Hurley



