

November 10, 2010

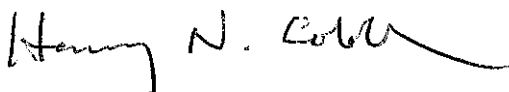
Lynne P. Brown
Senior Vice President for University Relations and Public Affairs
Office of Public Affairs
New York University
25 West Fourth Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10012

Dear Ms. Brown:

Although I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, my partner Ian Bader has told me how grateful he was for your helpful comments when he met with you three years ago to discuss the St. Vincent's Hospital project. I also understand that you met early in 2008 with I. M. Pei to discuss the University's plans for building on the block occupied by Silver Towers. Later that year, we were pleased to learn that the landmark designation of University Village had been ratified by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Last month we received the University's announcement that it had filed an application with the Commission for a fourth tower on the landmarked site.

After discussion with I. M. Pei, he and I are in agreement that the landmarked status of University Village now places us under an obligation to comment on the merits of the University's application insofar as the proposed fourth tower affects the integrity of the landmarked entity. Accordingly, I am today sending the enclosed letter to Robert B. Tierney, Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, setting forth our concerns and indicating our opposition to the application. Unfortunately, this places us at odds with NYU's proposal. Nonetheless, we very much hope that a solution can be found that will allow the University to achieve its development goals for this important site.

Sincerely,



Cc: I. M. Pei

November 10, 2010

The Honorable Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Tierney:

My colleagues and I have long been committed to the belief that cities thrive by responding creatively to the ever-evolving needs of the institutions they nurture and house. It is therefore with much reluctance, but also with firm conviction, that I write to oppose the application submitted by New York University for a fourth tower in University Village.

While I appreciate the care taken by NYU and its design team in addressing the problem of how best to provide needed new facilities on the University Village block, I disagree strongly with the proposed solution.

In principle, and without regard to the specifics of its design, a fourth tower is profoundly destructive of the landmarked entity, because it closes a composition that was intended to be open and upsets the carefully considered balance between solid and void. It also seriously compromises the generous visibility of Picasso's *Bust of Sylvette*, which in counterpoint to the existing towers galvanizes a notably successful overlay of public and private domains. The fourth tower deprives University Village of its kinetic sense of energy, renders it static and self-centered, isolates it from the surrounding urban context, and replaces the lively compositional gesture of the three-tower group with an insistent, self-referential pinwheel system.

The proposed elimination of the existing building in the northwest corner of the block compounds the problem by further isolating the group of towers from its urban context. The important interplay that now exists between the two normative block-defining buildings and the three exceptional towers is lost. In this case, more open space does not make better urban design.

Although NYU's alternative scenario, with a 17-story building in the corner, is unattractive as represented in its filing, an as-of-right building on that site is nonetheless preferable to the proposed fourth tower. Ideally, the corner building would be designed so as to make it more responsive to its neighbors and to the landmarked entity.

I have discussed the fourth-tower proposal with I. M. Pei, and he has authorized me to state that he shares the concerns expressed in this letter and joins me in opposing NYU's application. He also wants you to know that he still stands by a statement of his, quoted in the University Village Landmarks Designation Report, that is relevant to this matter: "A city, so far from being a cluster of buildings, is actually a sequence of spaces enclosed and defined by buildings. This may sound strange, but it is the essence of urban design."

Thank you for your consideration of the views set forth herein.

Sincerely,



Cc: Lynne P. Brown, Senior Vice President, New York University
I. M. Pei