

January 22, 2010



Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation

252 East 11th Street  
New York, New York 10005

(212) 475-9585  
fax: (212) 475-9582  
www.gvshp.org

*Executive Director*  
Andrew Berman

*President of the Board*  
Arbie Thalacker

*Vice-Presidents*  
Arthur Levin  
Linda Yowell

*Secretary / Treasurer*  
Katherine Schoonover

*Trustees*  
Mary Ann Artzman  
John Bacon  
Penelope Bareau  
Elizabeth Ely  
Cassie Glover  
Thomas Harney  
Leslie S. Mason  
Ruth McCoy  
Florent Morellet  
Peter Mullan  
Vals Osborne  
Andrew S. Paul  
Cynthia Penney  
Robert Rogers  
Jonathan Russo  
Judith Stonehill  
Fred Wistow  
F. Anthony Zunino III

*Advisors*  
Kent Barwick  
Lucy Ceecere  
Joan K. Davidson  
Christopher Forbes  
Margaret Halsey Gardiner  
Elizabeth Gilmore  
Carol Greitzer  
Tony Hiss  
Martin Hutner  
James Stewart Polshek  
Elinor Ratner  
Henry Hope Reed  
Anne-Marie Sumner  
Calvin Trillin  
Jean-Claude van Itallie  
George Vellonakis  
Vicki Weiner  
Anthony C. Wood

Hon. Robert LiMandri, Commissioner  
NYC Department of Buildings  
280 Broadway, 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10007  
Via fax to 212/566-5575

**Re: 178 Bleecker Street, Manhattan**

Dear Commissioner LiMandri:

Following up on multiple conversations with Department staff, I would like to thank the Department for the close attention it has paid to the application for an 8-story building at 178 Bleecker Street, and for issuing the notice of intention to revoke the approvals the Department had previously given for this development.

It was deeply gratifying to see that in its January 7<sup>th</sup> letter notifying the owner of the failure of the application of its audit and the intention to revoke approvals in 15 days, the Department cited the applicability of the Sliver Law and its limitation of new construction of this sort on Bleecker Street to no more than 60 feet in height. As you know, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation has contended from the beginning that the Sliver Law is applicable here and must be enforced, and that the applicant's claim that this development was exempted because the existing building already exceeded 60 feet in height or because of a merger of zoning lots with neighboring buildings was false. While we were disappointed in October when the Department initially approved the plans indicating that it did not believe that the Sliver Law was applicable here, we are glad that the Department has currently changed its position and has, as we requested, conducted an independent survey to confirm that the original building did not in fact exceed 60 feet in height.

It is our understanding that the applicant is now meeting with the Department to respond to the objections in the audit, as is his right. I strongly urge the Department to hold firm to its position that the Sliver Law is applicable in these circumstances, and that no plans are approved and no permits are issued for any development which exceeds the 60 foot height limit.

On a related note, it is our understanding that the applicant is seeking approval for plans that would include the additional floor area that is afforded a development which includes a 'community facility,' and may be seeking full lot coverage on the ground floor on this basis as well. While the zoning may allow this, we have seen many applicants, such as the nearby 159 Bleecker Street, make similar claims in their applications of the inclusion of community facilities in order the access this additional bulk or waivers from lot coverage requirements, only to find after the building is constructed that there is in fact no

community facility to occupy the space (five years after its completion, it is my understanding that 159 Bleecker Street still has no community facility). I strongly urge the Department not to approve plans that would grant additional floor area or lot coverage exemptions based upon the purported inclusion of a community facility without proof that a legally defined community facility will in fact occupy that space.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman  
Executive Director

Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer  
State Senator Tom Duane  
Assemblymember Deborah Glick  
City Councilmember Christine Quinn  
Donald Ranshte, Department of Buildings  
Leah Donaldson, Department of Buildings