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November 28, 2012

The Hon. Amanda Burden
Chair, New York City Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Burden:

As the State Senator representing historic Central Harlem, Morningside Heights, West Harlem, part of the Upper West and East Sides and portions of East Harlem's El Barrio and Washington Heights, I am petitioning you today on behalf of a neighborhood outside of my district. At the behest of the hardworking Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, I'm speaking up for one of America's most unique communities, South Greenwich Village.

Part of why I so strongly urge you to reassess plans proposed for the South Village, part of why I'm concerning myself with a place so far from where I live, is because this community is so important to the history, culture and identity of our city, state and country. So many different types of people lived and work and created here. Great Artist, writers, teachers and creators have called and call the Village home. And this, with its world-wide fame, makes the Village so much like Harlem in my district. An unmatched architectural legacy, one boasting beautiful building from every period, also makes the village similar to Harlem.

The distinction that makes both communities irreplaceable living treasures is undeniable. The threats which each face are equally clear. One answer to the unintended consequences of over-heated development pressures, with corporations and institution sponsoring over-scaled, over tall buildings that overwhelm and alienate historic blocks and local residents alike, is comprehensive landmarking. This is not the only way to reduce the too generous height and bulk limits currently proposed by Trinity Realty for Hudson Square. Nor is landmarking the only way prevent new structures based on the unfortunate example of the colossal Trump SoHo building from dwarfing nearly every other building in the area.

But landmarking that commemorates the heritage, not just of the rich or the elite, but of all the New Yorkers who helped make America great, is certainly the perfect partner of down-scaled zoning, with substantive affordable housing. This kind of partnership is government's best way forward toward realizing a LEEDS Platinum style sustainable city, one as welcoming to long-time residents, new immigrants, appreciative tourist and business alike.

In light of so much of inestimable value that's already been lost forever, Landmark designation, long-promised by the city, should happen right away, uptown and down. In light of the increased pressure a Hudson Square rezoning would put on the area, I urge you to only approve the Hudson Square rezoning in tandem with protection that will enable people to enjoy the same special spot we so love today, for many generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Perkins".

Senator Bill Perkins
New York State Senate 30th District