



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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September 16, 2011

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224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206
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City Councilmember Margaret Chin
165 Park Row, Suite 11
New York, NY 10038

City Planning Commission Chair Amanda Burden
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

**Re: NYU's Announcement of Green Strips Parks Application as Part of
Expansion Plan Zoning Application**

Dear Sirs and Madams:

NYU recently announced that it will seek to have two of the four publicly-owned green strips it had previously planned to seek possession of as part of its NYU 2031 Expansion Plan designated as New York City park land. In its announcement, the university claimed that this move "gives the community what it has sought for many years."

As one of many community groups which called for these pieces of publicly-owned land – remnants of Greenwich Village's successful battle against Robert Moses' plans to connect Fifth Avenue to his planned Lower Manhattan Expressway – to be made permanent parkland, we wish to make clear that this is not, by any stretch of the imagination, what the community has sought.

Leaving aside the fact that NYU is still seeking to take possession of two publicly-owned pieces of land (one of which it is also seeking permission to construct a 275 ft.

tall, nearly 1 million sq. ft. building on top of), the conditions under which NYU is seeking to have these spaces designated “parkland” make a mockery of the notion of public parks space. NYU is seeking to have an easement over this parkland, which would allow them to build underneath the park, dig through the park, take over the park for use as a construction staging area for their adjacent massive building projects, and close the parks to the public at any time. By the university’s own admission, they foresee these “parks” being closed to the public for years at a time. And as part of their overall NYU 2031 Expansion Plan, the university is seeking approvals to build massive structures directly bordering the “parks,” which would trap them in shadows for much of each and every day.

This should in no way be mistaken for an improvement to the plan or in any way consistent with what community groups have been calling for. In fact, we have been quite consistent in what we have called for: maintaining the public green space on these blocks as true usable, public open space; keeping the open space requirements in place; and having the university seek alternative locations, such as the Financial District, for its massive planned developments, given how oversaturated this area already is with NYU facilities.

I thus continue urge you, in the strongest of terms, not to approve NYU’s proposed expansion plans. The university’s proposed possession and gutting of public green space, removal of open space preservation requirements, lifting of urban renewal deed restrictions, and addition of 2.5 million square feet of space – the equivalent of the Empire State Building – to an area already woefully oversaturated with NYU facilities, is totally unacceptable to this community.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Parks Department Commissioner Adrian Benepe
Members of the City Planning Commission
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Municipal Art Society
New Yorkers for Parks
Community Board #2