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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

October 06, 2020

Sarah Carroll
Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: 26 West 95th Street (LPC-21-01103)

Dear Chair Carroll:

I write to express concern regarding an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 26 West 95th Street on the Upper West Side of Manhattan (Item No. LPC-21-01103). I believe that constituents and preservation groups alike are correct in expressing concern over this proposed renovation.

Located in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, the rowhouse in question not only holds historic significance itself but sits within a block where residents have fought repeatedly to preserve its architectural and historic integrity. The developer, who only came into ownership of the property in February of this year, is seeking to extend each floor into the rear yard, build a rooftop addition, and conduct some preservation work on the front façade, including the construction of a new stoop. Both neighbors and local preservation organizations have contested this project, citing concerns about the major enlargement of the building's bulk and scale, and the loss of light and air in the adjacent backyards.

While I am glad that the developer is restoring the façade and the stoop, additions to the roof and rear of the building would be out of context. The rooftop addition would be inconsistent with the surrounding built environment, and a rear yard extension of this magnitude would sever the preserved 'doughnut shape' of the block and continuous interior courtyard, significantly affecting the rear yards of surrounding buildings and the overall cohesion of the block.

I feel strongly that the Commission should cast a wary eye on any developer who claims that an increase in bulk and scale, and an addition to the roof, are necessary to accommodate the needs

of future condos, rentals, or a family residence. In this case, the plans are for a 1st floor apartment and an upper floor triplex with an addition room above on the roof. I call attention to two recent applications to the Commission for similar redevelopments on this block, and the plans were scaled back thanks to advocacy and your input.

Considering these issues, I urge the Landmarks Preservation Commission to request a more appropriate renovation that will effectively protect the preserved quality of the block.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President