

**THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY**

October 18, 2011

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING ALTERATIONS ADDITIONS AND DEMOLITION AT 933-943 MADISON AVENUE AND 31-33 EAST 74TH STREET IN THE UPPER EAST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Good day, Chairman Tierney and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy's Public Policy Committee reviewed this proposal, and we would like to start by thanking the architects for a thoughtful presentation which addresses the complicated issues of the site.

The houses at Madison Avenue and 74<sup>th</sup> Street were built as an ensemble of nine in 1876. Almost immediately they started to change: On Madison, stoops were removed and storefronts installed; on 74<sup>th</sup>, a new façade on one house, and a new building altogether where two had stood. In recent years, the Madison Avenue facades have been covered with unsightly netting. Under the guidance of the Landmarks Commission any future changes should enhance and complement the character of the Upper East Side Historic District.

Several years ago, we were not able to support a plan by the Whitney Museum which included demolition of a contributing row house on Madison Avenue. We are pleased to see that a new owner is instead restoring the façade of 941 Madison and the other historic buildings. Cleaning, pointing and restoring the masonry facades, repairing the cornices and iron work; retaining historic elements of the storefronts; and installing new wood windows to match the originals will protect the building envelopes and be a significant improvement for the block.

In addition, several of the proposed alterations are acceptable to us. The two-story rooftop addition is sufficiently set back from Madison Avenue. In the past the Commission has approved the demolition of "no-style" buildings, and we find that the proposed infill at 943 Madison and at the rear extension of 933 Madison facing 74<sup>th</sup> street to be appropriate based on their height and scale. Our committee did not receive a comprehensive presentation of the proposed materials or many details of the new construction, and therefore we cannot comment on those aspects.

Finally, we are not able to support the new taller mid-block addition, which would be visible from both Madison Avenue and 74<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed new construction would be, in part, a violation of mid-block zoning height requirements, which go hand-in-hand with landmark designation to maintain the special sense of place on the Upper East Side.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.