

**THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY**

October 22, 2013

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING CERTIFICATES OF
APPROPRIATENESS FOR 1780 BROADWAY, THE BF GOODRICH COMPANY BUILDING AND 215
WEST 57TH STREET, THE AMERICAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY, BOTH INDIVIDUAL LANDMARKS**

Good day, Chairman Tierney and Commissioners. I am Alex Herrera, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy has reviewed the proposal for a project that will include storefront infill at the BF Goodrich Building and a new building that will cantilever over the American Fine Arts Society, also known as the Art Students League of New York.

To start, the component of the project which we support. The installation of storefront infill and work at the façade of the BF Goodrich Building will certainly be an improvement. Substantial alterations had obscured the entrance, leaving only fragments of the historic fabric. The restoration of limestone at the façade and balconette, of the granite and marble base, and of the terra cotta engaged columns, as well as the re-establishment of two long-removed side entries will return this entrance to its original appearance.

We have also seen plans for storefront infill at the adjacent 1790 Broadway, and believe that they will improve that building. We would however, suggest that the owners there consider using Vermont marble at the base to match the original. Cast stone is acceptable, but marble would be a more attractive and appropriate option. In concert with 1780, this work will revitalize the distinct architecture of Automobile Row for a new retail environment.

Now, the aspect that we oppose. The new tower on 57th Street can be built as-of-right. As we understand it, the question of appropriateness relates only to the proposed cantilever over the adjacent Art Students League building. Here, we must caution the Commission. We are sure that the owners will comply with Department of Buildings notice 10/88 to protect this individual landmark. However, this will be a massive addition hanging directly over a landmark, and if there is a mishap, if the crane goes awry in construction, or if there is some other kind of accident in the future, this building could easily be destroyed. While the design and height of the overall tower are also as-of-right, we are concerned that the cantilever is an awkward element that will dwarf the landmark, throw it in shadow, hang over it like an iceberg and could ultimately prove a danger to the Art Students League.

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