

# **NEWS**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

From: Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY)

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### **REBNY ISSUES STATEMENT ON LANDMARKS ACTION: PROPOSAL WOULD CREATE 5 CONTIGUOUS UPPER WEST SIDE HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

#### **Statement critical of the substance and process of proposed designation**

**NEW YORK, Nov. 18, 2010** -- The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY), the city's most influential real estate trade association with 12,000 members, today [issued a statement](#) following the decision by the Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar a proposal that would create five contiguous districts, forming one massive historic district on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The proposed extension runs from West 70<sup>th</sup> Street to West 109<sup>th</sup> Street and from Broadway to Riverside Drive. The statement is critical of the substance and the process of the proposed designation and questions the reasoning behind it.

“Calendaring this proposal is yet another clear example of landmark preservation being used for neighborhood planning. The regulatory burdens that accompany landmarking will impede development, which is vital for our city’s physical and economic growth,” said Steven Spinola, REBNY President. “This proposal to extend the landmarked area on the Upper West Side where nine historic districts already exist, raises questions about the standards for designation and the indifference to the burdens on building owners and city resources to comply with this additional governmental review.”

The statement notes that the proposed extension follows a now all-too-familiar pattern – an area is studied and a historic district is created, which should encompass all of the meritorious buildings deserving preservation and protection. Then years later, in response to proposed development outside of the district, neighbors organize and seek the expansion of the historic district. In this case, The West End Preservation Society was reportedly formed by two neighbors after the undistinguished townhouses adjacent to their apartment buildings were proposed for redevelopment. The Society commissioned a research study of a large section of West End Avenue which triggered the designation interest.

According to REBNY's statement, the Upper West Side already has nine existing districts and numerous individual landmarks. The proposed extension will capture and designate much of the remaining Upper West Side, making virtually the entire neighborhood a historic district, including many properties which are ordinary and are not landmark quality by anyone's standards.

REBNY believes that historic districts are important to maintain the historical and architectural fabric of the development of the City, where they contain cohesive historic building context and meritorious buildings, according to the statement.

Mr. Spinola added, "Historic districts should not be used to prevent neighborhood growth and development. Using landmark designation to protect views from penthouse apartments, to freeze architectural style preferences of a few current residents and to promote the self-interests of private parties is a misuse of the landmarks law. As a result of these actions, our city faces the loss of needed new housing and commercial development, job creation and tax revenue for basic services and the innovative architecture that has helped to make New York a truly global city."

- [Read REBNY's Statement regarding the Landmarks Preservation Commission Action](#)

#### **About The Real Estate Board of New York**

The Real Estate Board of New York is the city's leading real estate trade association with 12,000 members. REBNY represents major commercial and residential property owners and builders, brokers and managers, banks, financial service companies, utilities, attorneys, architects, contractors and other individuals and institutions professionally interested in the City's real estate. REBNY is involved in crucial municipal matters including tax policy, city planning and zoning, rental conditions, land use policy, building codes and legislation. In addition, REBNY publishes reports providing indicators of market prices for both the residential and commercial sectors.

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