



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

232 East 11th Street
New York, New York 10003

(212) 475-9585
fax: (212) 475-9582
www.gvshp.org

Executive Director

Andrew Berman

President of the Board

Mary Ann Arisman

Five Presidents

Arthur Levin

Linda Yowell

Secretary/Treasurer

Katherine Schoonover

Trustees

Penelope Bareau

Meredith Bergmann

Elizabeth Ely

Jo Hamilton

Leslie S. Mason

Ruth McCoy

Florent Morellet

Peter Mullan

Andrew S. Paul

Jonathan Russo

Judith Stonehill

Arbie Thalacker

George Vellonakis

Fred Wistow

F. Anthony Zunino III

Advisors

Kent Barwick

Joan K. Davidson

Christopher Forbes

Margaret Halsey Gardiner

Margot Gayle

Elizabeth Gilmore

Carol Greitzer

Tony Hiss

Martin Hutner

Regina M. Kellerman

James Stewart Polshek

Elinor Ratner

Henry Hope Reed

Alice B. Sandler

Anne-Marie Summer

Calvin Trillin

Jean-Claude van Itallie

Vicki Weiner

Anthony C. Wood

May 29, 2007

Robert Kerrey
President, The New School
66 West 12th Street, room 800
New York, NY 10011

Dear President Kerrey,

I write regarding the New School's plans for a large new facility on the current site of the Albert List Academic Center at Fifth Avenue and 14th Street. The type of large-scale development the New School is contemplating is no doubt of tremendous importance to the future of the university, and is, as I am sure you are aware, of great interest to residents of Greenwich Village.

As you know, in 2006 when the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation first became aware of plans for a large new development on this site by the New School and saw sketches from the New School's Annual Report of a draft design, we reached out to your representatives to begin a dialogue about the development and to provide what we hoped would be constructive input regarding the project. We acknowledged that the site allowed new development of a considerable size and density. However, we did want to ensure that the design for any new development was appropriate to its context, especially in light of certain public approvals the development would require for use of public funds for acquisition of development rights from neighboring properties.

Among the suggestions we most strongly urged the New School to consider was that the new development respect the largely residential context around it and not look too much like a glass-walled office building, which we feared might be the case from the drawings we saw. While the varied context of the intersection of 14th Street and Fifth Avenue clearly does not prescribe any single aesthetic, it did however seem clear that a glass-curtain wall office building aesthetic would not be appropriate for this location, and that this was a potential pitfall for any design as large as what was being contemplated. In addition, we urged that no plaza be incorporated as part of the design, and that while a building of substantial size was likely at this location, that there be care to ensure that the size was not inappropriately large for its context. We continue to hope that the New School will take these suggestions seriously.

We have not heard back from the New School since we provided this feedback. The article and pictures in this week's Villager would seem to indicate that the design has not changed from what we had seen, which gives us some concern, as it does for some of the New School's neighbors. Like many of them, we also have some concerns about the plan for glowing colored light being emitted from large sections of the building.

Hopefully the design process for this project is still at an early enough stage that concerns such as these can be addressed. I think that ultimately it will serve the

interests of the New School as well as its neighbors if the school is willing to solicit and respond to feedback from the affected community about this very significant project. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak further with you or appropriate staff at the New School about this project and the design process you anticipate it following.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Berman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: Borough President Scott Stringer
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
State Senator Tom Duane
City Councilmember Rosie Mendez
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Community Board #2, Manhattan
Community Board #5, Manhattan
Union Square Community Coalition
Board, 7 East 14th Street
Board, 12 East 14th Street
Board, 69 Fifth Avenue
Board, 10 West 15th Street



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

232 East 11th Street
New York, New York 10003

(212) 475-9585
fax: (212) 475-9582
www.gvshp.org

Executive Director
Andrew Berman

President of the Board
Mary Ann Arisman

Vice Presidents
Arthur Levin
Linda Yowell

Secretary/Treasurer
Katherine Schoonover

Trustees
John Bacon
Penelope Bareau
Meredith Bergmann
Elizabeth Ely
Jo Hamilton
Thomas Harney
Leslie S. Mason
Ruth McCoy
Florent Morellet
Peter Mullan
Andrew S. Paul
Cynthia Penney
Jonathan Russo
Judith Stonehill
Arbie Thalacker
Fred Wistow
E. Anthony Zunino III

Advisors
Kent Barwick
Joan K. Davidson
Christopher Forbes
Margaret Halsey Gardiner
Margot Gayle
Elizabeth Gilmore
Carol Greitzer
Tony Hiss
Martin Hutner
Regina M. Kellerman
James Stewart Polshek
Elinor Ratner
Henry Hope Reed
Alice B. Sandler
Anne-Marie Sumner
Calvin Trillin
Jean-Claude van Itallie
George Vellonakis
Vicki Weiner
Anthony C. Wood

March 4, 2008

Robert Kerrey
President, The New School
66 West 12th Street, room 800
New York, NY 10011

Re: Proposed new building at 65 Fifth Avenue (at 14th Street)

Dear President Kerrey,

I write regarding the recently revised plans by the New School to develop a large new building at 65 Fifth Avenue, the current site of the Albert List building.

Since first becoming aware of the New School's plans for developing this site in 2006, the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation has consistently communicated to the New School our understanding of the importance of this development to the school and our recognition of the school's ability to develop a building of significant size at this location as-of-right. However, we have also consistently communicated our concerns about key aspects of the planned development, including its use of glass and its unrelieved height and bulkiness. As you know, the height and bulk of the proposed building are not as-of-right, and would in fact require, among other things, approval of a variance requiring proof of a "hardship" suffered by the university necessitating it be exempted from zoning restrictions for the site.

The latest information about the planned development only increases many of these concerns. It is now our understanding that the proposed building would not be 265 feet to the top of the uppermost occupied floor as originally specified, but would be 300 feet, with an additional 50 feet of setback enclosed mechanical equipment on top of that. This is nearly unprecedented in this neighborhood, especially for a building that would rise straight up over the entire site, without setbacks, which the zoning for this site does not allow. In order to be able to build this proposed building as planned, The New School will need an exemption from the zoning requirement that the mass of the building be set back from the street above a certain height, as well as special permission to transfer bulk from the eastern edge of the site to the western 2/3 of the site, which makes the proposed building walls along 14th Street, 5th Avenue, and 13th Street so massive.

It is also our understanding that the design for the building continues to be almost entirely glass on the exterior – a choice which we think is not only problematic in terms of the character of the neighborhood, but much more likely to lead to issues regarding light from the building shining out into the surrounding predominantly residential community, especially at night. We are happy that the New School has eliminated the original planned element of multi-colored lights projecting from the building, but we still feel that this remaining element is a problem and should be re-thought.

It is unfortunate that after more than a year of discussions, the design for the building seems to be getting larger and bulkier – exactly the opposite direction we have been consistently urging the school to move in. While we recognize that this project is incredibly important for the future of the university, we also hope that you recognize how great an impact the proposed project could have upon its neighbors and the broader community at large. We hope that these issues can be resolved before The New School begins the public approval process for the variances it plans to seek for this project.

I look forward to a continued dialogue with the New School on this subject, and I urge the school to make revisions to its current plan regarding the design, size, height, bulk, and massing of the proposed new building.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

Cc: City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Tom Duane
City Councilmember Rosie Mendez
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Jane Crotty, Arzt Communications, Inc.
Union Square Residents Alliance
Union Square Community Coalition
Board, 7 East 14th Street
Board, 12 East 14th Street
Board, 69 Fifth Avenue
Board, 10 West 15th Street