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June 15, 2009

Ms. Amanda Burden  
Chairperson  
City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Burden:

I am writing to urge you to extend protective low-rise contextual zoning, similar to what currently exists on the west side of the Bowery, to the east side of the Bowery between East 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Canal Street. The historic Bowery is one of the oldest streets in New York City. It has hosted many important movements in American urban culture, from early vaudeville to poetry readings, to pioneers in rock and roll.

A couple of years ago, I conducted a survey of buildings on the East Side of the Bowery between East 4<sup>th</sup> St. and Canal St. and found that over 80% of the buildings did not exceed 85 feet. Regardless of the FAR of buildings on the east side of the Bowery, many of which occupy most of the building lot, they have a remarkable consistency in scale and style. This uniformity, which has existed since the early 1900s, is being scarred by the rampant development of oversized luxury buildings, hotels, as well as a dorm and museum built in the past decade.

The current zoning does not adequately protect this historic district, and provides large financial incentives for property owners to demolish existing buildings, displacing the Bowery lighting, restaurant supply and jewelry districts, as well as the last few remaining SROs which house scores of low income single adults. Hundreds of SRO residents have already been displaced from the Bowery since the 1990s.

In the place of these businesses and housing types, we will only see more luxury, out of scale development, and more bars and bistros, which have created huge quality of life problems for long-term neighboring residents.

I urge that the DCP use its planning and land use tools thoughtfully and in an expedient manner to preserve what remains of the historic Bowery so that it can remain a thriving boulevard, housing a diverse array of businesses, and an economically mixed residential population. Thank you for the opportunity to express our organization's desire to see the Bowery preserved.

Yours truly,

Steve Herrick  
Executive Director