



MAGIC

UNITY

MIGHT

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MAGICIANS

PARENT ASSEMBLY NUMBER ONE

115 EAST 9TH STREET 14D

NEW YORK, NY 10003

212 725 5258

12/21/11

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

Dear Ms. Burden:

I am writing you today in support of the East Bowery Preservation Plan to preserve the low-rise existing architecture of this historic New York City Boulevard.

The Bowery goes back to the birth of Manhattan. Nothing is more New York than the Bowery. Once a Native American footpath its name is an anglicisation of the Dutch word *bouwerij* and is derived from this antiquated Dutch word for "farm."

Perhaps "farm" is a good name for this place of first growth and new beginnings. The Bowery is the site of New York's earliest theater district. It is the place that great American music was born from the likes of Irving Berlin on the lower Bowery to The Ramones at CBGBs. Artists have taken their first steps living and creating countless careers for over a century in its low-rise buildings. There is too much rich Bowery history to list here and I know your time is valuable.

For me naturally I know it as the place Harry Houdini first performed professionally. One of those performances was at the Globe Dime Museum in 1894 that stood on the Bowery very near Houston Street. He was to become the most famous magician of all time. He joined the Society of American Magicians in 1908. After making us a national organization he in 1917 became president of the New York City assembly, which we call the Parent Assembly Number One.

As I travel and spend time in cities like Paris and Venice I am always struck by how they covet their history. Preserving their culture and architecture they still attract business and travelers from around the world. Perhaps we should draw a line in the sand and save this important part of our history and culture. Perhaps drawing those visitors to our history and culture as public art does so well. We need to do so before New York loses what makes it the great city that it is. It is a place to treasure. I love it so that I bought and settled here over 30 years ago.

Best in Magic,

Tom Klem
Artist/Historian
Archivist and Trustee of S.A.M. P.A.# 1