

184 Bowery Condominium
184 Bowery
NY, NY 10012

NYC Department of City Planning
Amanda Burden, Director
Manhattan Borough Office:
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Dear Ms. Burden,

As property owners, residents and landlords, we as members of 184 Bowery Condominium Assoc. are a small community -- part of the larger community of The Bowery. Yes, it is our neighborhood! We have lived here, in this building, for lengths of time ranging from 12 to 38 years. We have seen changes, yet it remains a stable community of long-term residents and commercial establishments.

Specialty districts - Lighting, cash register, Jewelry, and Restaurant supply - make The Bowery a destination of residents and tourists. Bowery history - myth, legend and reality - provide the text of many books as well as for tour guides.

Bowery structures are the repository of our city's past legacy. New York's historical roots, grand style (NY's first theater district) to low life (skid row), many stages our beloved Bowery has gone through since it's beginning as an Indian trail.

The Bowerys' residents, past and present, are both artistic and diverse. Many well-known artists and musicians reside and have resided here (both visual and literal) -- Weegee haunted this street with his camera, Robert Frank lives and works here, William Burroughs lived on this street and immortalized it in his writings, June Leaf, Mark Rothko, Roy Lichtenstein, Jay Maisel, Albert and David Maysles, John Giorno, Brion Gysin, Maya Lin, Clayton Patterson, James Rosenquist, Kate Millett, Lenny Kay, Quentin Crisp, Bela Bartok, Brice Marden, Will and Robert Ryman, Stephen Crane and many, many others. Yoko Ono made her famous Fly movie in our building. Jessica Lang lived here before she became famous. Jim Jarmusch has lived on the Bowery and used the street in his film Stranger Than Paradise. It is also the home of immigrants fresh from their native lands. This famous street has quite a sense of place - which makes it a favorite location for film projects.

Five years ago someone from 100 years ago could have stood on the Bowery and recognized the buildings and their surroundings. This has all changed and beautiful Federal buildings and buildings from the 1860s with provocative histories are being rapidly destroyed. These are the very buildings that bring tourists and economic benefits to our neighborhood. Visitors will often list the Bowery as one of the uniquely N.Y. destinations, along with Central Park, 5th Ave., Grand Central Station, etc. A street of generic hotels does not capture the imagination and romance that continue to spark the local economies. Growth and re-generation seem to be an essential part of the process without which neighborhoods die from disinterest and disrepair- but the opposite is also true. Preservation of this historically important district is still possible if we act fast (we have lost too much of what defines this neighborhood already).

Change is inevitable and development can be good - if it respects its local environment and if it is not a destructive force to the local population. What is happening on this historic street is offensive - high density, high rise luxury hotels and condominiums cut off sunlight, air and space and overburden an already overtaxed infrastructure. For example a hotel is being proposed on the corner of Delancey and Bowery. They want to build it 30 stories high and four buildings wide (tearing down some wonderful 1860 buildings including a faux French Townhouse, the first of the famous Germania Bank buildings). This is already one of the most congested streets in the city. The thought of life after such a hotel is built is almost unthinkable. It doesn't make any sense. The noise and pollution levels from traffic on weekends are almost unbearable as it is. We should respect and improve what already exists.

We add our voices to all the others and ask The City Planning Commission to do what is right and follow the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors ' Proposed East Bowery Preservation Plan'. This rezoning would ensure that the east side of The Bowery would be in line with the rest of the community -the Noho Historic District, and the Little Italy Special District, and the East Village/Lower East Side. Please act to preserve what helps make New York City special and inviting.

Sincerely,

 Sara Driver

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John Campo John Campo

8-11-09