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

December 5, 2011

Dear Chair Burden:

I write to you today to express The Victorian Society New York's (VSNY) strong support of the East Bowery Preservation Plan. Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nineteenth-century heritage as well as that of the early twentieth century (1837-1917). VSNY, formally known as The New York Metropolitan Chapter, oldest of numerous chapters now flourishing throughout the country, is an independent organization affiliated with the national society.

The Victorian Society New York has a long tradition of supporting and advocating for the preservation of significant Victorian era culture, history and architecture throughout the city. In 2010, VSNY achieved success when we convinced the New York City Landmarks Commission to designate 135 buildings as the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District Extension, after a long campaign. Regarding the Bowery, few streets in America have had such a profound impact on our nation's Victorian history and culture as the Bowery. Of particular importance is the street's 19th-century significance as one of America's most influential entertainment districts. Tap dance, vaudeville, and Harrigan and Hart (fathers of American musical theater), are just a few of the Victorian cultural hallmarks that have emerged from the Bowery.

Today, the Bowery needs to be preserved in order to maintain the important Victorian architecture that still remains. Unfortunately, the Bowery's historic resources and its low-rise character are being destroyed at a rapid pace. It is for these reasons that we strongly support and urge you to enact the East Bowery Preservation Plan. The Bowery's west side does not have the jarring out-of-scale towers found on its east side because of the height caps in the Special Little Italy District and the Noho Historic District. The East Bowery Preservation Plan simply asks that those height caps be extended to the street's vulnerable east side. Only through this restriction will the low-scale significant architecture of the Bowery be preserved for future generations.

If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me at 718-614-8579 or info@vicsocny.org. In the interim, I hope you sincerely consider the East Bowery Preservation Plan and move forward on preserving this integral part of New York City's irreplaceable Victorian heritage.

Sincerely,

Frampton Tolbert
President

The New York Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America