

A 91-year old's Plea to Save Our Neighborhood

The Lenox Hill neighborhood is under siege.

A sense of neighborhood is the beating heart of a city. Northwell Health, a rich and powerful institution, plans to violate the neighborhood by building a 434' foot hospital tower where a community hospital stands now. There is a total disregard of the zoning laws and the wishes of the community. The eleven-year building project whose aim is an immense tower that will loom over 19th century neighborhoods will not add to the health of the community.

My family moved to 3rd Avenue and 78th when I was a boy and the 3rd Avenue elevated train was still operating. I have lived within that area for over eighty years. The UES was a group of small neighborhoods. We had our toy shop, our marvelous Mme Bonte's French bakery, Rosedale fish market with a nasty proprietor but with whom you traded because his fish was the freshest in the city. On the downside for a child, a few too many bars - but not enough to spoil the sense that I was a boy who lived in a wonderful small town set in a great city.

There were antique shops, thrift shops, and groceries. It was not created by design but by the needs of the neighborhood. The best places to live are not planned communities but those that have grown organically from the needs of its residents.

Now all this is under threat by the proposed plans for Lenox Hill hospital – Northwell is determined to destroy the nearby historic 19th century brownstones and build a behemoth of a hospital tower that will destroy all the nearby historic side streets, once considered safe from tall buildings by the zoning laws of the city fathers and mothers.

The proposed Lenox Hill Hospital tower will be the Godzilla of hospitals - devouring a community rather than adding to it.

If you live on the Upper East Side - even if you don't but care about a city of communities -- please add your voice in protest to this expansion of the hospital.

Bigger is not always better. At my age, I doubt if I will be around to see this desecration of a civil society completed - but it is an obligation for us to protect a future we may not experience for those who come after us.

Kindly lend your support to sreckler@SaveLenoxHill.org. Your voices will be heard.

Warmest regards,
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