



MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE

450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2109

New York, NY 10123-2199

212-465-0907

fax: 212-465-1628

Lola Finkelstein
Chair

Pamela Cole
District Manager

February 21, 1997

Hon. Jennifer J. Raab
Landmarks Preservation Commission
100 Old Slip
New York, New York 10007

Re: The St. Moritz Hotel and request to landmark Central Park South (59th St. from 5th Ave. to 8th Ave.)

Dear Chair Raab:

At the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of Community Board #5 on February 13, 1997, the Board passed the following resolution by a vote of 33 in favor; 0 opposed; 2 abstentions:

Whereas, Community Board #5 is very concerned with the possible alteration of the St. Moritz Hotel as reported in the New York Times; and

Whereas, it was reported that Donald Trump, now involved in the alteration of the hotel, is planning to re clad it in glass; and

Whereas, as described in Steve Rutenbaum's, Mansions in the Clouds: The Sky Scrapper Palazzi of Emery Roth: "Emery Roth left his indelible mark on the skyline facing the Western edge of Central Park... (now designated)... and contributed to the fanciful skyline on Central Park South during the late twenties and thirties. In 1929-1930 he built the 1,000 room, 38 story St. Moritz"; and

Whereas, the romantic silhouette of the St. Moritz creates some of the masonry magic that marks Central Park South. A series of asymmetrically arranged setbacks above the 21st floor culminate in a square tower capped by a gilded globe at the apex of a pyramidal red tile roof; and

Whereas, one contemporary writer described the hotel as, "a picturesque cliff, amidst towering trees to the north and other soaring skyscrapers to the south' and there was tea at Rumbelmayer's, the world famous Parisian pastry shop on the hotel's ground floor; and

Whereas, along Central Park South there is a wall of distinguished masonry buildings including the Plaza Hotel, the Hotel St. Moritz (Emery Roth, 1930), the Gainsborough Studios, the Barbizon Plaza (1930), the Hampshire House (1931), the Essex House (1930), the New York Athletic Club, 240 Central Park South and 2 Columbus Circle which together form an opulent architectural and appropriate wall for the historic and lush parkland opposite; and

Whereas, the St. Moritz hotel is in danger of being completely re clad in a glass curtain wall, and is an architecturally valuable building in the grouping of architecturally important building forming a unified and elegant wall to Central Park on its South side; therefore let it be

Resolved, Community Board 5 urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider and calendar for designation Central Park South (59th Street from 5th Avenue to 8th Avenue) as an Historic District in order to preserve this rare and important collection of buildings which are important for themselves and for the landmark Central Park.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Lola Finkelstein
Chair



Jonathan Foster
Co-Chair, Landmarks



Joyce Matz
Co-Chair, Landmarks

cc: Hon. Ruth Messinger
Hon. Thomas K. Duane
Hon. Andrew Eristoff
Hon. Antonio Pagan
Hon. Kenneth Fisher
Hon. Gifford Miller
Jo Ann Macy, Community Board 4

Ethel Sheffer, Community Board 7
Jack Taylor, Community Board 6
Brendan Sexton, Municipal Arts Society
Peg Breen, New York Landmarks Conservancy
Frannie Eberhardt, Historic District Council
Arlene Simon, Landmark West!