

# New Fight Flares Over Lincoln Center Tower

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Critics and proponents of a proposed 43-story apartment building planned in the Lincoln Center area traded arguments again today in the latest round of what is shaping up as the hottest zoning variance battle of the year.

Some witnesses claimed the tower as necessary to keep the city from "plunging further into a building depression" while others warned that it would "destroy" the neighborhood around it.

Today's skirmish came in a packed Board of Standards and appeals hearing room at 80 Lafayette St. where the battle lines were drawn between representatives of a wide range of civic organizations and spokesmen for the construction industry.

At issue was a request by developer Paul Milstein for a variance to build the tower on the east side of Broadway between 62d and 63d Streets more than 50 per cent larger than zoning regulations permit.

The proposed site is within the Lincoln Square district—one of the city's 20 special zoning districts created by the Planning Commission to encourage good design and special architectural amenities through incentive bonuses to builders.

Maurice F. Paprin of the Assn. of Builders and Owners said failure to construct the apartment "would hold back the growth of the city" and praised Milstein for being "courageous enough to begin a building with middle income apartments during the depression we are all beginning to feel."

But John Mazzola, managing director of Lincoln Center, said he was convinced the tower would "arbitrarily destroy the special district

and arbitrarily destroy this part of town.

"It would strike a terrible blow to an area of the West Side which has been developing beautifully," said Mazzola.

Lawyer Charles Moerdler, who represents Milstein, criticized the media for creating what he said was a highly-charged "atmosphere" surrounding the variance battle and added that the city "leads the vanguard in failing to build because each person has his own ox to gore."

## 'Depression Slums'

He added that whether the variance is granted will show "if New York wants to head further into depression, decline and slums."

Borough President Percy Sutton, through a spokesman, said the variance would "deal a death blow to the intent and purpose of our special districts."

The variance request asks for a floor area ratio of 21.6, far above the maximum for the district and the highest obtainable under city zoning regulations. The highest floor area ratio set for the Lincoln Square district is 14.4.

During today's hearing the board made public a letter from Planning Commission Chairman John Zuccotti to Milstein in which Zuccotti said the commission "would not and should not approve" any formal request to construct the building.