**LPC-21-01234** and **LPC-21-02537 175 Fifth Avenue - Flatiron Building - Individual Landmark - Ladies' Mile Historic District - Manhattan - Block 851 - Lot 1**

Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nineteenth and early 20th century heritage. The NY chapter promotes preservation of our historic districts, individual landmarks, interiors and civic art.

We oppose the adoption of the master plan for storefronts at the Flatiron Building as currently proposed. The original, historic storefronts are well documented, and the master plan should more closely reflect the historic design. First, the proposed ubiquitous transom louvers are destructive of the character of the storefronts and the whole ground floor of the building. The full-height louvers destroy the lofty transparency of the original storefront transoms, and the partial-height louvers create an inappropriate and non-historic horizontal division. We suggest looking to creative mechanical engineering solutions and/or architectural design to address ventilation requirements.

Second, the introduction of sidelights with heavy vertical mullions adjacent to each of the storefront entrance doors destroys the entire proportions of the storefronts. It appears these sidelights are being proposed for accessibility reasons, but providing automatic door actuators would eliminate the requirement for space adjacent to the door pull and the need for the sidelights.

Third, reconfiguration of bays 7, 13, and 18 to double-door entries is inappropriate, as it appears to have no historic precedent and seems counter to the point of the master plan, to bring historic consistency to the storefronts over time.

Finally, to enhance the proposed new building entry infill at Broadway and Fifth Avenue, we recommend returning the long-missing metal Roman lattice to the arches and transoms. This feature, so typical and iconic in buildings of this age and style, would help restore the prominence and architectural character of the historic entrances. With the other restorative work proposed for the entrances, now is the time to complete the design.

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**LPC-20-09908 959 Sterling Place - Crown Heights North Historic District II - Brooklyn - Block 1242 - Lot 1**

Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our nineteenth and early 20th century heritage. The NY chapter promotes preservation of our historic districts, individual landmarks, interiors and civic art.

We oppose this proposal for a new building on the grounds of the former Brooklyn Methodist Episcopal Church Home within the Crown Heights North Historic District II. The most significant question is whether any building of this type on the grounds of the Home is appropriate. The placement of the original complex in nearly the very center of the lot clearly shows that the intent was for it to be a free-standing structure with expansive grounds. Fully articulated on all sides, the complex was designed to be seen in the round, and doubtless the open space was an important amenity to its residents as well as the developing community around the complex. A building of the scale and type proposed would severely compromise these essential characteristics of the historic complex and its relationship to the surrounding architectural community. The south elevation of the proposed building on slide 39 clearly shows the proposal’s weaknesses: obscuring the picturesque roofline of the historic complex, clashing with the small scale of the adjacent rowhouses, and presenting a massive wall to the street.

We would not say that no building could work here, but the proposal’s overwhelming mass and height, and the weakly-derivative design—a thinly traditionalist skin attempting to cloak a massive, modern building—is not the answer. What might work would be a series of smaller buildings scaled to complement the historic character of the neighborhood and contrast with the institutional character of the Home. For a single large building, one need only look a few feet away at the Methodist Home itself to see how to design a large building that complements and fits within its historic context.

We note also that the proposed garage entrance ramp is inappropriately located immediately adjacent to the historic Gothic Revival Chapel, a situation that will visually degrade the character of this important component of the historic complex.

Any proposal to cut off visual access to the south elevations of the historic complex could be mitigated by providing a public easement between the historic complex and the new building.

It isn’t clear why the work on the historic complex is being presented, as it is not part of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new building. If it is intended to be a “sweetener” for the proposal, we say that the proposed work appears to be quite incomplete and second-rate: asphalt roof shingles, failure to replace missing projecting masonry features, and no mention at all of the remaining historic, multi-light, Queen Anne-style windows.

We urge the Commission to deny this proposal, as it is so far from being appropriate. However, if the Commission feels it can be successfully modified, then we urge that the hearing remain open so that the public can continue to engage in the design review process.