



AIA New York Chapter
The Founding Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Chair Robert Tierney
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th floor
New York NY 10007

June 24, 2008

Dear Chair Tierney,

On behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and its 4,400 architect and public members, we are writing to express our strong support for the designation of I. M. Pei's Silver Towers. As an example of pioneering modern design by an eminent architect, the Silver Towers are a critical piece of New York City's architectural heritage.

These sculptural and striking towers were built in the 1960s as part of urban renewal efforts in Greenwich Village. Constructed as moderate-income housing for Village residents and the NYU community, the complex serves as a particularly successful example of planning theory that valued open space in conjunction with density. The height and texture of the towers stand out in the Village, but they are well liked among neighborhood residents who resist a similar scale in, for example, some of New York University's newer buildings. This success should be attributed to the elegant design of the towers and the site. The cast concrete facades of the towers, with their hundreds of framed windows, are appealing even as they are monolithic. The superblock creates a substantial amount of public space that remains an important place for people to sit, walk, and enjoy a view of the buildings. In addition, the plaza contains a unique piece of public art that is a neighborhood highlight: a sculpture by Carl Nesjar of Picasso's "Bust of Sylvette."

We urge the Commission to designate these buildings.

Sincerely yours,

James McCullar
President

Fredric Bell
Executive Director