Testimony of Scott Dwyer
Before the New York City Planning Commission
For the Public Hearing on The New York University Core Project

Chair Burden and Fellow Planning Commissioners,

The current superblocks are monolithic failures for which the City, the community, private developers and NYU were all to blame. In a recent zoning article by the Wall Street Journal’s architectural editor and critic Julie Iovine, their style was characterized as “a misstep, a deadening tower-in-a-plaza motif that resulted in wide and windswept public spaces avoided by pedestrians”. The presence of these hulking residential structures protecting private, walled-off gardens in a neighborhood that has historically brought the public together in a chaotic patchwork of streets, is a travesty. But we can’t recreate what’s long gone, nor should we. We must move forward, work with what we have, to improve, to change, and to grow. NYU’s Core Project efficiently maximizes the space above and below ground with much needed academic facilities. At the same time, it returns land to the public in the form of parks and gardens which have incorporated better, modern-day urban planning theories. As a neighborhood resident since 1997 and property owner since 2011, I would hate to kill an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the last century for the sake of perpetuating a nice, comfortable place where everything stays the same. If I wanted that neighborhood, I’d have fled to the suburbs years ago.

NYU has been and will probably continue to be a resident of Greenwich Village longer than anyone in this room. While the focus of this hearing is the project’s local impact, we cannot forget the University’s global reach as a hub of world-class education and research. Preventing or limiting this project and thereby handicapping the University in New York now, will cause undue harm in the future, to communities around the globe that will benefit from the advances and breakthroughs that only a fully-resourced University can offer.

Thank you for your time.