



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

A private university in the public service

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New York, New York 10012-1019  
telephone: 212 998 2345

August 27, 2009

Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Scott,

I am in receipt of your letter regarding the construction work taking place at 133-139 MacDougal Street and the removal of a portion of one of the walls of the Provincetown Playhouse theatre.

I have assembled my team and been briefed on the situation. There was a clear breakdown of communication on the part of the university, and I have challenged my team to do better and to ensure that such gaps do not occur again.

You, and all of the members of the Task Force, have worked diligently to set us all on a path toward improved dialogue and interaction between NYU and our neighbors. And the responsibility is ours to meet the expectations that have been set.

I have asked Alicia Hurley to provide a written response with an update for the work at the site as well as to address the questions raised in your letter. I am confident that we can get back on track.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are any further concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

John Sexton



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Alicia D. Hurley, Ph.D. *Vice-President*

August 27, 2009

Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer  
Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Construction at 133-139 MacDougal Street

Dear Borough President Stringer,

As requested by President Sexton, I am providing a report and response to the questions raised in your letter dated August 17, 2009.

Just over four weeks ago, the MacDougal site project manager raised concerns about the northernmost wall of the Playhouse theatre. The project manager indicated that the contractors had concerns about the stability of a section of the wall and might need to remove a piece of the wall due to structural concerns. The main concern was that it was determined that there was a possibility that the shoring efforts could lead to a collapse of the wall. At that time, suggestions were made about how to proceed given the importance of the walls, but there was unfortunately some confusion in my office about the extent of the impact. Again, I reiterate that the miscommunication that led to the lack of notice to the Community Board and Task Force lies with my office.

But in response to your questions, I will outline here why a portion of the northern wall of the Playhouse had to be removed. The northern wall of the site is roughly 89' in length and while half of that wall is comprised of brick (both above and below grade), half of the wall's below-grade foundation consisted of a mixture of stone and rubble bound by weak mortar. Some portions of the wall were infilled with brick masonry, many sections were in disrepair and the wall thickness varied because of missing sections.

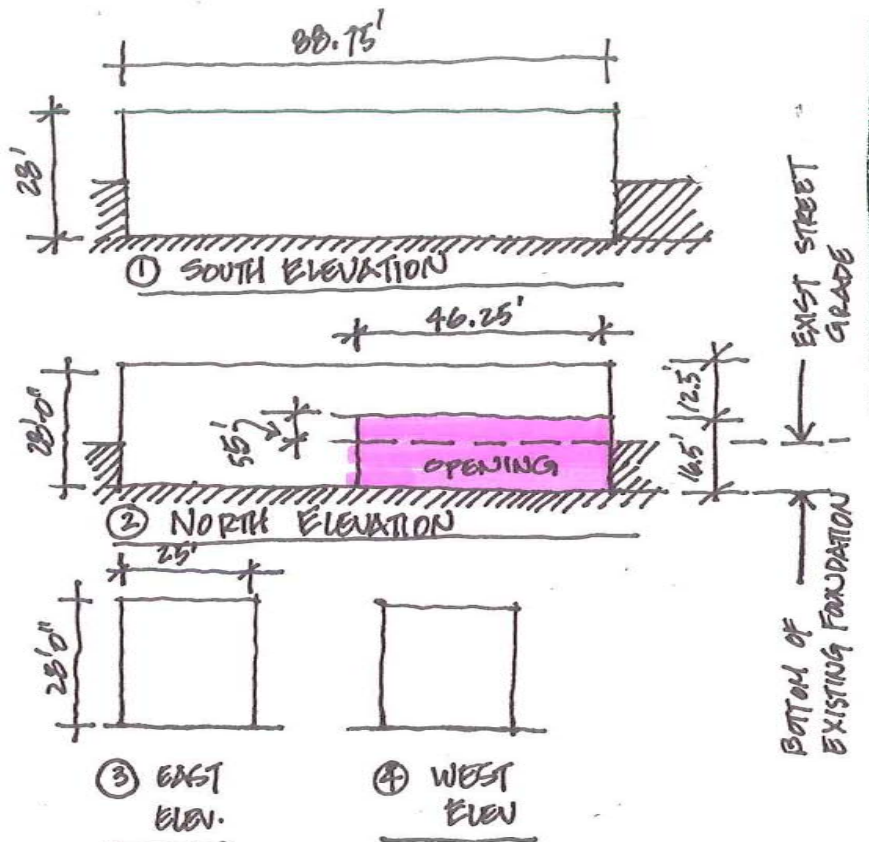
Stabilizing the entire Playhouse structure has required extensive underpinning involving undermining three foot segments of wall below the elevation of the existing foundation and installing new concrete pits at a lower elevation. The condition of the portion of the northern wall that was supported by rubble and mortar, made the underpinning work not only hazardous to those working on the site but could have led to a collapse which would have compromised the rest of the northern wall. As the site is rebuilt, it is critical that all of the foundation walls be soundly built.

The cumulative actions to date, which include removal of a portion of the northern Playhouse wall, have led to the full stabilization of the Playhouse volume and the upper walls remain completely intact.

For clarity on what exactly was removed, dimensions are provided:

- The total existing area of the four Playhouse walls is approximately 6,370 square feet, including below grade
- The wall area that had to be removed was 765 square feet (12 percent of the total Playhouse wall area)
- The northern wall of the theater is 89 feet in length
  - The length of the wall that had to be removed was 46 feet
- The northern wall is approximately 17 feet above street grade
  - The area that had to be removed was 5 feet 6 inches above grade (by 46 feet in length)
  - The below grade area that was removed was 11 feet in height

The following is a drawn diagram to depict the current conditions of the northern wall (again, the other three walls remain entirely intact).

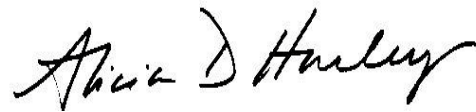


As requested, the work pertaining to the Playhouse has ceased. The shoring up of the walls is complete. The next steps are to rebuild the wall and then to begin the work of installing the superstructure.

As discussed, we would like to invite Taskforce and Community Board members to a full briefing and visit to the site on Thursday, September 3rd at 3 pm. The briefing will take place in Furman Hall, Room 324 (245 Sullivan Street between Washington Square South and Third Street) and attendees are invited to join us on the site to view the opening and stabilizing efforts. We would also like to use this time to discuss the best approaches for keeping the intact structure in place and for rebuilding the piece of the Playhouse's northern wall. Please ask Task Force members to RSVP to Dan Ferris ([dan.ferris@nyu.edu](mailto:dan.ferris@nyu.edu) or 212-998-2401) to ensure we have proper accommodations for the site visit.

Once again, I apologize for this unfortunate gap in communication and look forward to continuing to work with your office and the Community Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alicia D. Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Alicia D. Hurley