



July 16, 2025

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES REGARDING THE LENOX HILL HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Good day Chair Riley and Council members. I'm Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is a 52-year old organization dedicated to preserving, revitalizing, and reusing New York's historic buildings and neighborhoods. We want to ensure that New York's rich diversity of architecture continues to enhance the City: creating jobs, housing New Yorkers, encouraging sustainability, and welcoming visitors from around the world.

The Conservancy opposes Lenox Hill Hospital's redevelopment plan, which would radically change zoning in this neighborhood. Although this site is not a designated landmark, it contains several historic buildings designed by notable architects York & Sawyer, and it is surrounded by historic districts. This proposal calls for the demolition of those hospital buildings and would drastically disrupt the relationship of the hospital and its neighbors.

The City deserves world class medical institutions. We appreciate that Lenox Hill needs to upgrade services, but there are experts who disagree with the Hospital's insistence that this is the only sized building that can meet their needs. There must be a way to do that without such a negative impact on the character and quality of life of the neighborhood.

We urge you to demand revisions that bring this proposal closer to as-of-right. Perhaps the number of beds, the ceiling heights, and the size of the mechanical spaces could be reduced. The proposal is not a minor change to the zoning. The new building would be three times larger than what current zoning allows. The 436-foot-tall hospital tower would have massive floorplates rivaling the Freedom Tower and exceeding those of any other hospital tower in the area. In the past, the Council has exercised its authority to make changes, such as the reduction in height at the New York Blood Center (301 East 67th Street.) This site deserves the same consideration.

The upzoning of the Lexington Avenue site and the midblock on East 76th Street threatens carefully calibrated zoning protections that maintain the character of Park and Lexington Avenues and their low-rise midblock corridors. It disregards Lexington Avenue's historical constraints as a narrow, pedestrian-heavy, retail-oriented corridor with "special neighborhood character." The proposed tall building additions along 76th Street would disrupt the hard-won, low-rise character of the mid-blocks, which are largely residential. If this proposal is approved, it will set a precedent for upzoning throughout the neighborhood and the City.

THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY

Finally, we have to note that there have been almost no changes to this proposal despite six years of significant community opposition, alternate plans, testimony from medical experts who question the need for this program, and concerns about City-wide health equity. Early on, an out-of-scale Park Avenue residential tower was suggested and quickly rescinded. Other than that, through a task force, so-called community engagement, multiple presentations to the Community Board, and this ULURP, the project remains essentially the same.

So Council members, we ask you to make the changes that will allow both Lenox Hill Hospital and the surrounding community to co-exist and thrive. Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.



Tamayo Architects, P.C.

Marco Tamayo, R.A.

515 East 81 St Street #1B
New York, NEW YORK 10028
Phone: 212-517-2158

July 16, 2025

Dear, City Council Members,

I am Marco Tamayo, an architect and resident of the Upper East Side. My firm designs passive, sustainable buildings that comply with the highest energy standards. After extensive training with ASHRAE, I can confidently say Northwell's proposed hospital tower is needlessly out of scale.

Under its current plan, Northwell could reduce this building's height by **around 100 feet** — **without losing a single square foot of needed medical space** — simply by modernizing its outdated mechanical systems.

Today, **25–30% of the building's height** — about **150,000 sq. ft.** — is taken up by oversized mechanical rooms and extra floor-to-floor heights that only waste energy and space. Northwell itself admitted at Community Board 8 (Jan 28, 2025) that they are using a **“trial and error”** approach for their energy systems — a clear sign that there is no defined mechanical need to justify the bulk they're asking for.

Moreover, their glass-heavy façade, inefficient ductwork, and excessive window-to-wall ratio will make this building a giant radiator, wasting precious energy now and failing to meet NYC's Local Law 97 net zero targets by 2050.

There is a better way:

- Use a **passive building design** — better insulation, balanced fenestration, tighter infiltration — to drastically cut energy loss.
- Install a **geothermal system** (NYC DDC confirms the site is suitable) to eliminate bulky cooling towers and reduce carbon emissions.
- Use **DOAS fresh air systems** with **energy recovery** and **chilled beams** for precise, efficient ventilation — especially critical for operating rooms.

These proven solutions would shrink the mechanical footprint, cut energy use, **lower the building height by ~100 feet**, and deliver a **modern, sustainable hospital** that fully meets Northwell's programmatic needs **without burdening our neighborhood** with unnecessary bulk.

I urge the City Council Members to insist on smart, efficient design — not to rubber-stamp excessive height that serves outdated systems and oversized egos. Please make this a condition for approval.”

Respectfully,

Marco Tamayo, RA

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Marco Tamayo.



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Respectfully,

“The Northwell plan can be 100 feet lower without losing medical space — by replacing obsolete systems with proven clean technologies that cut energy waste and respect our neighborhood. Please make this a condition for approval.”