

Dear Ms. Maldonado,

My name is Joan Pleune. I have lived on the corner of State and 3rd for 33 years. Until 8 years ago I lived at 514 State in a lightless, small, dump of an apartment. 514 is directly across the street from the old working paper building. I raised my 3 children there. Most often we used the oven for heat. Eight years ago the last of my children left home and my rent was rising astronomically. The YWCA was in the process of renovating 4 floors of rent stabilized, subsidized studio apartments for single people. I was lucky enough to win the lottery on one of these apartments. I chose a corner studio apartment with four huge windows--2 on State Street and 2 on 3rd Avenue--catty corner to--you guessed it--the old working paper building. I've never hung shades or drapes in my new digs. I love the sunlight and its reflections streaming in my windows. When my application for this housing was approved, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. My now grown children and I formed a convoy and moved me from the southeast corner of State and 3rd to the southwest corner. I've been there 8 years now. When I first moved in I watched the sunrise on sunny days. But then some mean-spirited developer with no taste built 300 Ashland place and took my sunrise away. Even at that, I still get enough sunlight to grow cactii. All that is about to change. My sunlight, and to some degree my happiness with it, is in jeopardy. My quality of life (such as it can be on that already congested, noisy corner) is threatened in order that more upper income housing can be built in a neighborhood that is already too affluent. It is Brooklyn's disgrace that this property is not being used to build Khalil Gibran a new school, and provide some green space for the entire neighborhood--both the folks who live here and the folks who work in the downtown area. It's not impossible to envision mixed use space that can benefit young and old alike and everybody in between. We who live in the YWCA have no place to sit and watch the world go by. Many of us are on the plus side of 65 and that's one of the things we like to do. You'll find us sitting in the bus stop at 3rd and Atlantic pretending we're actually going somewhere. Don't you think Brooklyn can do a little better for her old people?

I want to be clear. I am not a brownstoner. If a modified version of the current plan were to be proposed that would provide housing and green space for folks who don't have much--such as those of us who live in the Y or people who work at Target--I would suck it up and put up with some loss of sunlight and the additional noise, congestion and pollution that such a project would entail. But that's not what's on the table here. So I join forces with my brownstone neighbors (whose concerns don't always mesh with mine) in opposing this project. If they decide to put their bodies on the line and block the bulldozers, they can count me in.

Sincerely,

Joan Pleune

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