

Testimony of the Municipal Art Society  
Before the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee of the City Council  
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ULURP Review of the Dock Street Development, DUMBO, Brooklyn  
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I am Melissa Baldock, Kress/RFR Fellow for Historic Preservation and Public Policy for the Municipal Art Society, speaking on behalf of MAS. The Municipal Art Society is a private, non-profit membership organization that fights for intelligent urban planning, design, and preservation through education, dialogue and advocacy.

MAS has long scrutinized development adjacent to the Brooklyn Bridge that would affect the Bridge's integrity and alter views both of and from the Bridge. It was therefore in light of the effects the Dock Street development will have on the Brooklyn Bridge – one of our city's, if not our country's, most significant and identifiable architectural treasures – that MAS' Preservation Committee reviewed the ULURP actions before the subcommittee today.

The Brooklyn Bridge is an indisputable icon of New York City, and protecting it from encroaching large-scale development is of utmost importance. The Brooklyn Bridge is no ordinary historic structure; it has been afforded the highest level of recognition and protection in the United States, that of National Historic Landmark status. It is one of only 11 National Historic Landmarks in Brooklyn, and as such, is recognized as being of "exceptional value to the nation" as a whole. The Dock Street development, therefore, is not just a DUMBO issue, or even just a Brooklyn or New York City issue – it is an issue that has drawn attention from people throughout the United States and beyond because the Brooklyn Bridge is a quintessential American symbol.

The height, bulk, and configuration of this proposed 18-story building directly adjacent to the Brooklyn Bridge is simply not acceptable. The Environmental Assessment Statement for this project justifies the height of the new development by comparing it to other historic buildings in the neighborhood. It claims that the new development will "relate in height and bulk to several of the taller loft buildings in the area." However, these buildings are not located directly adjacent to the Bridge, and it is this proximity that makes the proposed development so objectionable.

By contrast to other buildings of similar height in DUMBO, the proposed Dock Street development site directly abuts the Brooklyn Bridge, with a portion of it actually running underneath the Bridge. The 18-story portion of the proposed development, although set back somewhat from the Bridge, is still too close to the Bridge's span. As a result, the development

will affect views of the Bridge from DUMBO's streets, and will mar the iconic views of DUMBO, the Manhattan Bridge, and the East River from the Bridge.

The Brooklyn Bridge is one of the city's most visited tourist destinations. In a city where tourism is such an important part of our economy, we should question why we would allow one of the City's greatest experiences – that of walking across the Brooklyn Bridge – to be so irrevocably and detrimentally altered. We look to the City Council members to recognize the harm that this development will do to the Brooklyn Bridge and to reject the requested zoning changes.