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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE
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Greenwich Village Little Italy SoHo NoHo Hudson Square Chinatown Gansevoort Market

April 22, 2013

Robert B. Tierney, *Chair*
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre St., 9th Floor North
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

1ST LANDMARKS MEETING

1 - LPC Item: 8 - 298-308 Lafayette Street (Houston) - SoHo-Cast Iron H.D. Extension
A store building built c.1929, a garage built c. 1930s - 40s and a gas station built c.2000.
Application is to demolish the buildings and construct a new building. Zoned M1-5B

Whereas, we reiterate our gratitude to the Commission for its wise decision in 2010 to include this property within the SoHo Extension; and

Whereas, the applicant reached out to community leadership prior to presentation, listening to their opinions, which were generally favorable.

However, there was some concern, understandably, from half a dozen residents of the adjacent building, who testified that the new construction would block views of the Puck Building from Houston Street, that the building's architecture is out of character, that it is bulky, and that it is not in context; and

Whereas, the demolition of the three insignificant buildings presents no problem; and

Whereas, widening of the sidewalk adjacent to the subway is welcomed; and

Whereas, we appreciate the addition of street trees as part of this project, and only wish that the Commission would reconsider permitting further street trees throughout SoHo; and

Whereas, the applicant did not advise CB#2, Man. that the project as currently envisioned depends upon approval by the City Council of a zoning text amendment that CB#2, Man. opposed; and

Whereas, there was some discussion over the appropriateness of such deeply recessed open-areas/balconies on the upper floors, since such a feature has heretofore been alien to the district; and

Whereas, the vegetation proposed for the open areas, like the open areas themselves, is generally alien to the district and could appear peculiar were it located within the core of the Cast-Iron District. But it's not, and, in the hodge-podge that is Houston Street and at the very corner of the historic district, both elements actually add a new, refreshing component to that thoroughfare; and

Whereas, we compliment the applicant for the sympathetic treatment of the massing; and

Whereas, the contemporary materials proposed work well on Houston Street, which has seen so much change in the past ninety years; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application; and

It is further resolved that this recommendation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission does not impact the board's separate recommendation regarding an application for this project to the City Planning Commission pursuant to ZR 74-712 ; and

It is further resolved that CB#2, Man. reiterates its opposition to the proposed zoning text amendment that would increase the maximum lot coverage permitted to allow special permits under 74-712 and considers the text amendment a potential risk to contributing buildings within the Soho Landmark District.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre St., 9th Floor North
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

2 - LPC Item:9 – 148 -150-152 Mercer Street, aka 579-581 Broadway - SoHo-Cast Iron H.D.
A storehouse built c.1860. Application is to install storefront infill, signage, and lighting.

Whereas, we were flabbergasted at a proposal that would essentially remove these original, historical, iconic shutters, not only detracting from this building but from the historic district as well; and

Whereas, rear-window shutters have been championed many times by the Commission as a key element in the district's iconography.

Furthermore, so fundamental are shutters to these old manufacturing districts, that contemporary real-estate development has actually introduced shutters on the front façade of new construction; for example, most recently on Bond Street in the NoHo Historic District; and

Whereas, so important are these Mercer Street shutters, surviving since 1860 for over 150 years, that the Designation Report itself focuses on their vital contribution to the three buildings' architecture.

The Report first describes the "very simple and direct architectural treatment" of the three buildings, which serve as rear entrances for the Broadway buildings.

However, the Report continues, this "utilitarian handling is very successful, however, due largely to the one-and-one-half stories of iron shutters, cast by the Jackson Foundry, that cover nearly all of the lower portion of the façade"; and

Whereas, by effectively keeping these shutters permanently open, this proposal would eliminate the harmony that the shutters and the simple façade share, as well as the shutters' contribution to the architecture and history of the district; and

Whereas, the applicant told us that the proposed façade restoration intends to make the three buildings “more uniform”. Yet, paradoxically, removing the shutters would wreck the unity of the very façade that the applicant seeks to unify; and

Whereas, the need for installing a huge 14’ x 6’ expanse of glass for a showroom window is dubious at best. Windows this size above the level of the ground floor are very rare in the historic district, if present at all; and

Whereas, we worry that, were these windows allowed to be installed, they would be not used to display mannequins or merchandise, being so high above the sidewalk and the view of passers-by. Instead, they could merely serve as a medium for huge business or advertising signage, in an attempt to attract shoppers’ attention to the retail use; and

Whereas, the applicants asked us, and may ask the Commission, whether they are to be told that the shutters must remain closed permanently. Our response was in the affirmative, and we trust that will be the Commission’s response as well; and

Whereas, the exculpatory examples presented by the applicant of large, frameless fenestration were specious: the examples were either irrelevant, not legalized, located on a non-contributing building, or a one-off that somehow snuck in before preservationists realized how detracting they are to the historic district. These examples should be passed over by the commission; and

Whereas, further, these shutters are very important, not only for the building, but for the district. There exists only one other example of ground-floor shutters, further down Mercer at 84-94; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. strongly recommends denial of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

David Gruber, *Chair*
Bo Riccobono, *First Vice Chair*
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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

3 - LPC Item: 10 - 41 Charles Street (W4th/7th Ave)-Greenwich Village Historic District

A rowhouse built in 1869.

Application is to replace a window and construct rooftop and rear yard additions. Zoned R6

Whereas, the rooftop addition will not be visible from the street; but

Whereas, demolishing the historic façade, especially above the parlor floor, in is hard to rationalize; and

Whereas, this proposal is basically creating a new façade and is not really an “extension” of the existing one. This is a proposal for a façade that is pretty, but totally different from the historical one; and

Whereas, we applaud the restoration on the front of the building, but cannot condone the existing window being replaced by an essentially identical one. If the applicant is doing a restoration, it should be done right, without a request for a window that is out of character with the rest of the building and the district; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of the rooftop addition, but denial of the rear-yard addition and the basement window in the front.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

4 - LPC Item: 11 - 247 West 13th Street (7th/Greenwich) - Greenwich Village Historic District
An Italianate style rowhouse built in 1854. Application is to construct rooftop and rear yard additions and excavate the cellar and rear yard. Zoned C1-6/R6

Whereas, adjacent property owners objected to this proposal, not only because it would interfere with their light and views, but also, and far more troubling, because of the potential damage to their foundation; and

Whereas, the committee thought the proposed rear-yard addition was an egregious design that mashes up three different types of windows on the same façade. The stairwell-window fenestration expresses something more like a commercial building than a row house; and

Whereas, the rooftop addition is only visible from a distance away; and

Whereas, whether due to poor subsoil, the general exigencies of construction, or both, some damage – minor or major – to adjacent buildings is inevitable when excavating to the party wall.

The common method of excavating – shoring up and underpinning the neighboring buildings' foundation – is well intentioned but far from perfect.

A better solution would be not to disturb the foundation, footing and party wall, but instead to excavate a few feet *away* from the shared foundation, respecting the natural, structural “angle of repose”.

This method may result in some loss of desired interior square-footage that the applicant seeks, but is a much more prudent procedure and will greatly mitigate structural damage as well as neighbors' acrimony; and

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of the rooftop addition but denial of the rear extension; and, further,

Be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that the LPC take a more prudent approach and not permit the removal of soil immediately adjacent to the foundation.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

5 - LPC Item: 12 - 11 West 12th Street (5th/6th)-Greenwich Village Historic District

A townhouse originally built in 1847, and altered in the 20th century.

Application is to alter the front facades, rebuilt the rear façade, and construct a stair bulkhead.

Whereas, the proposed alteration to the front façade will not detract from it; and

Whereas, this building is an exception, in that there is little historical material and character remaining in the rear façade; and

Whereas, the building is surrounded by tall buildings, with no doughnut to speak of, and no row-house neighbor to complement; but

Whereas, we recommend locating the ventilation stacks of the adjoining building that have been placed on this roof back to the adjoining building; this measure would eliminate the unsightly stacks from public view; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application, but suggests that during such a major building renovation, the ventilation stacks be moved over to the actual building they service, in order to enhance the public's view of this attractive townhouse.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

6 - LPC Item: 13 - 33 Greenwich Avenue, aka 133 West 10th Street- Greenwich Village H.D.
A white brick apartment building built in 1960-61.
Application is to remove the existing canopy that was altered without Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s) and install a new canopy.

Whereas, the work proposed will enhance this building as well as the district; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

7 - LPC Item: 14 - 30 Grove Street-Greenwich Village Historic District

A transitional Greek Revival/Italianate style townhouse built by Linus Scudder.

Application is to excavate the cellar and rear yard. Zoned R6

Whereas, the owner proposes to excavate 18' in order to build a 55' basement swimming pool with a generous 9'6" ceiling in an historic townhouse, which excavation is proposed to reach right up to both adjoining party walls; and

Whereas, neighboring property owners objected to this proposal because of the potential damage to their building; and

Whereas, the proposal to pave over the rear yard would remove an essential element of this rear yard, or, in fact, of any historical rear yard: namely, vegetation, thus affecting the natural character of the doughnut; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of the proposed pavers and requests greenery instead; and, further

Be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that excavation not be permitted, in order to avoid any potential harm to the historical building next door.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

8 - LPC Item: 15 - 27 Downing Street (6th/Bedford) - Greenwich Village Historic District Extension II
An American Round Arch style stable with apartments designed by Alfred Zucker and built in 1893 with major alterations in 1920, 1924, and 1925.

Application is to construct a new rear façade and a rooftop addition, and replace windows. Zoned R6

Whereas, the rooftop addition would be very visible; and

Whereas, little of what was presented had architectural or historical merit: not the choice of materials; not in the arrangement of the fenestration; not in the style of the tilt-and-turn casements windows: and

Whereas, the applicant said that he wants “something new”, so creates an entirely new façade with little historical reference; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

9 - LPC Item: 16 - 410 West 14th Street (Greenwich/Washington) -Gansevoort Market Historic District
An Arts and Crafts style store and loft building designed by Charles H. Cullen and built in 1909.
Application is to install storefront infill, replace the canopy, and install signage

Whereas, the proposal will enhance the building and the district; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

2ND LANDMARKS MEETING

10 - LPC Item:10 - 430 Broome Street (n.e. Crosby) -SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District Extension
A Queen Anne style store and factory building built in the earlier part of the 19th century and altered in 1894-95 by Julius Kastner.
Application is to construct a rooftop addition. Zoned M1-5B

Whereas, although the proposed rooftop addition will not be visible or just barely visible from certain sightlines, it will be fully visible along Broome Street from west of Crosby to Broadway; and

Whereas, the applicant stated that a building proposed for the empty lot across from this building would block the view from Broome Street; but

Whereas, that lot has been vacant for decades and we cannot speculate when a building will actually be built there, a current C of A notwithstanding; and

Whereas, usually rooftop additions attempt to differentiate themselves from the original building. However, this calls attention to itself with a bold modernist design – on a Queen Anne building; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

11 - LPC Item:12 - 74 Wooster Street (Spring/Broome) -SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District
A factory designed by Charles Mattam and built in 1869. Application is to install new storefront infill, remove shutters, enlarge a light well and construct a rooftop addition. Zoned M1-5A

Whereas, there was no mock-up constructed by the time of the presentation to the community board; so the applicant could not provide us with data showing how visible the proposed structure would be. We cannot rely on a computer rendering. Thus it is an incomplete application; and

Whereas, regarding the shutters: It is not uncommon in the cast-iron district for some shutters to be missing, or randomly shut or open.

Rather than fabricate ersatz shutters, creating a Disneyfied version and a spurious shutter arrangement, it would be better to simply recycle the four original shutters, randomly deploying them on the rear façade, and making them operable, should the desire to employ them ever arise. There is no need to create an artificial addition; and

Whereas, the storefront looks too crisp and modern; it needs more detailing; and

Whereas, the fire escape has early detail, a Roman motif. Although some fire escapes detract from a building and should be removed, this interesting example should be preserved; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of the penthouse because the application was incomplete without a mock-up present; but, further,

Be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends saving and re-arranging the original shutters, enlarging the light well, preserving the fire escape, but would like to see more detailing in the storefront design.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

12 - LPC Item:14 - 395 6th Avenue (Greenwich/Gay) - Greenwich Village Historic District
A commercial building built in 1876, remodeled in 1958 and again in 1985 by James Polshek.
Application is to alter the facade, install storefront infill, and signage.

Whereas, there is nothing of the original façade remaining and numerous alterations have been done in a haphazard manner; and

Whereas, the new design is appealing and certainly better than the existing storefront; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

13 - LPC Item:15 - 33 Greenwich Avenue (W10/Charles) -Greenwich Village Historic District

An apartment building built in 1960-61.

Application is remove a sidewalk cafe enclosure altered without Landmarks Preservation Commission permit(s), and construct a new sidewalk cafe enclosure.

Whereas, two residents of the building appeared. Had they not alerted us, we would never have realized that the proposed fenestration of the storefront, instead of being fixed windows that we originally assumed they would be, has the potential to operate as sliding doors. This treatment would result in the disappearance of most of the storefront, as well as creating the further problem of restaurant noise invading residents' homes; and

Whereas, although unwelcome noise is not a criterion for denying an application, we should be careful when considering an alteration that could generate unneeded public criticism for the landmarking process, an alteration that serves no preservation purpose; and

Whereas, the applicant presented us with a nice treatment of a 1960s building. However, we were not presented with the way it may look, that is, wide open with little façade and storefront present; and

Whereas, were the multiple doors allowed to be open during business hours, we would have a void where there should be a storefront. We don't approve voids. Architecture is about space, not about voids; and

Whereas, such an open storefront is not characteristic of buildings of this style and era; and

Whereas, wire-mesh glass is appropriate in manufacturing districts, or in lot-line windows. However, it is wrong in this context. We prefer a solid bulkhead there; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application if, and only if, the fenestration remain closed and permanently fixed at all times. Otherwise, it would detract from the building and the district; and, further,

Be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of the proposed meshed wire bulkhead.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on April 18, 2013, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

14 - LPC Item:17 - 54 King Street (Varick/6th) -Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District
A Greek Revival style rowhouse built in 1841. Application is to modify the roof and rear facade

Whereas, the rooftop addition and trellis will not be visible, and the work on the rear will be an improvement; and

Whereas, while all this work is being done, it would be nice if the unsightly smokestacks were moved to made less visible; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

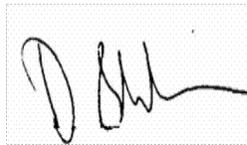
Sincerely,



Doris Diether, Co-Chair
Landmarks & Public Aesthetics Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Sean Sweeney, Co-Chair
Landmarks & Public Aesthetics Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan



David Gruber, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

DG/fa

- c:
- Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
 - Hon. Sheldon Silver, State Assembly Speaker
 - Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
 - Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, NY State Senator
 - Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member
 - Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Man. Borough President
 - Hon. Christine C. Quinn, Council Speaker
 - Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
 - Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
 - Pauline Yu, Manhattan Director, CAU
 - Andrew Berman, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
 - Jenny Fernandez, Director of Government & Community Relations,
Landmarks Preservation Commission