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Bo Riccobono, *First Vice Chair*
Sheelah Feinberg, *Second Vice Chair*
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*



Erin Roeder, *Treasurer*
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COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

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February 25, 2010

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 February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

1ST LANDMARKS MEETING

Item 1 - 155 Wooster Street (@Houston) – SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District

A Classical Revival style store and loft building designed by George F. Pelham and built in 1897-1898. Application is to install a painted wall sign. Zoned M1-5a.

Whereas, in 2000 the City Planning Commission and the City Council revised the Zoning Resolution regarding signage in SoHo/NoHo after years of agitation by citizens and civic organizations whose community was polluted and overrun by unbridled usurpation of the streetscape by advertising signs completely out of scale with historic proportion; and

Whereas, the applicant stated that the LPC allows 25% of a wall to be covered with an advertising sign, while the DOB's formula permits a maximum area of five times the frontage, considerably less; and

Whereas, although historically there were wall signs in the Cast-Iron Historic District, those were "business" signs for an enterprise within the building, and had an appropriate scale and proportion; and

Whereas, this application is not for a traditional "business" sign but for an "advertising" sign, which types of signs have no significant history in the district; and

Whereas, the sign on the building from the 1970s that the applicant presented as a precedent was smaller than the proposed sign and advertised a business in the building; and

Whereas, signs that were approved by the LPC in recent years along Houston Street as well as within the core of the historic district respected the scale of the buildings; and

Whereas, the proposed size is grossly out of proportion. Traditional business signs were a couple of hundred square feet in area; this advertising sign is almost a couple of thousand; and

Whereas, furthermore, this proposal, covering 27% of the surface area, exceeds even the Commission's guidelines of 25% coverage, which guidelines unfortunately misjudge or overlook the scale and proportion of historic signage in the District; and

Whereas, this sign is blatantly visible not only within the SoHo Historic District, but also from the individually landmarked Silver Towers directly across Houston Street, which has no commercial signage; and

Whereas, there is an excess of text, which makes it look cluttered; and

Whereas, apropos of text, we ask the Commission whether it wants to approve a sign that continues the promulgation of negative ethnic stereotyping, namely, as the text itself proclaims: "The Classic Polish Joke". Would we feel comfortable inserting any other ethnic group there?; and

Whereas, regarding the coloration: although the applicant proposed the image #L-200 in the presentation, we feel there is too much contrast, clashing, and color oversaturation in that image. Instead, we prefer a palette more like what was presented in #L-205, which is much more subdued, less distracting, and detracts less from the building and the district than image #L-200 does; and

Whereas, the applicant stated that similarly large signs on the building were approved by Landmarks, but no one on our committee ever recalls it coming before the community board; and

Whereas, last month, in response to many complaints from citizens and city agencies, the Buildings Department removed three huge vinyl signs of similar scale on non-designated tenement buildings along Houston Street between Thompson Street and Sixth Avenue in the South Village, directly to the west. Having this proposed sign as the only out-of-scale signage along this section of Houston Street would now be incongruous; now

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

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that in general the Commission re-think its guideline of 25% coverage, and in this specific case exercise what the Zoning Resolution sensibly recommends, namely, six times the frontage; and

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends a more subdued palette on a smaller sign.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 2 - 535 Hudson Street (n.w. Charles) – Greenwich Village Historic District
An apartment building designed by Samuel Roth and built in 1951-1953.
Application is to construct rooftop and rear yard additions. Zoned C1-6

Whereas, this apartment building consists of three older townhouses that were altered in the early 1950s; and

Whereas, people from the community appeared to voice their discontent that this proposed addition would be so visible to the public; and

Whereas, the proposed rooftop addition is highly visible from Charles Street and partly visible from Hudson Street, the main street of the West Village; and

Whereas, the 38” parapet wall that DOB requires on the roof will add to the visibility; and

Whereas, the intrusion into the ground floor courtyard makes no sense aesthetically or historically, and could be a fire exit problem, as well as a problem with noise for neighbors; and

Whereas, although the permitted FAR is 3.44, the building is already built up to FAR 3.96; and

Whereas, although the applicant’s architect was the only person to appear for the owner and could only speak to the design and materials, it is our belief that the owner’s intention is to apply for a Community Facility Allowance for a ground-floor use, thus being eligible to construct more bulk on this already bulked-up structure; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 3 - 17 West 8th Street – Greenwich Village Historic District

A Greek Revival style house built in 1845-46.

Application is to alter the façade and install windows and storefront infill.

Whereas, the installation of a new bulkhead at the base, painted wooden windows, doors, and steel channel are in similar scale, style and material common to the Historic District; now

Therefore, be it resolved that Community Board 2 recommends approval of this application.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

2ND LANDMARKS MEETING

Item 1 - 512 Broadway (Prince)– SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District
A Renaissance Revival style store and loft building designed by Lamb & Wheller and built in 1881-1882. Application is to install storefront infill.

Whereas, the doors proposed are acceptable but should be brought up to the level of the transom bar, which should be retained; and

Whereas, the wire mesh proposed for the bulkhead has analogies in other buildings in the district; but

Whereas, there is no basis for a wire-mesh display window, a treatment that is used on lot-line windows as fire protection; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of wire-mesh in the window; but

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends approval of the mesh grill at the bulkhead, as well as approval of the new door that should be brought up to the transom bar, which is an important element in the Cast-Iron District.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 2 - 393 West Broadway (Spring)— SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District

A warehouse designed by J.B. Snook & Sons, and built in 1889-90.

Application is to alter window openings and install windows.

Whereas, increasing the size of the window openings and installing matching double-hung windows will not detract from the building or the district; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 3 - 404-416 Bleecker Street, New Abingdon Playground – Greenwich Village H.D.

A modern playground and seating area. Application is to redesign the seating area and comfort station.

Whereas, the Landmarks Committee generally prefers to preserve the appearance of the Village at the time of designation or earlier in accordance with the landmarks statute; and

Whereas, we appreciate the retention of the former Bank Street passageway; and

Whereas, bringing the comfort station up to ADA specs is commendable and the treatment is pleasing; and

Whereas, the proposed lighting is an improvement; but

Whereas, we are concerned that the multiple changes proposed by the Parks Department may overly alter the historic appearance of the park; and

Whereas, the Landmarks Committee was not provided a compelling argument why pavers (rather than bricks) were required to preserve the tree roots; and

Whereas, we are concerned that the cool colors of the pavers are substantially different from the warm color of the brick; and

Whereas, the Landmarks Committee finds the pseudo-Victorian hoof benches unattractive and unrelated to the aesthetic of the Village; and

Whereas, we would prefer maintaining and restoring the brick paving, as well as restoring the simple benches, and not replacing them with pseudo-Victorian hoof benches; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. approves moving forward with this project subject to a careful reconsideration by the Commission of the details of the proposal in order to maintain more of the historic character of the park than what is currently proposed.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 4 - Washington Mews – Greenwich Village Historic District

A private street. Application is to reconstruct the street bed and sidewalks.

Whereas, the reconstruction utilizes historic styles, materials and configuration, improving the mews' streetscape, while at the same time attaining ADA compliance; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 5 - 7 & 8 Washington Mews - Greenwich Village Historic District

Two houses designed by Scott & Prescott and built in 1930. Application is to alter an entrance.

Whereas, restoring the era's glass blocks by the windows is commendable; and

Whereas, removing the steps in front of #7 in order to lower the bottom of the door will not only make the building ADA compliant but will actually make it match the adjacent building, #8; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 6 - 14A Washington Mews - Greenwich Village Historic District

An apartment building designed by J.E. Terhune and built in 1884.

Application is to alter the areaway and side façade, and replace windows. Zoned R-6

Whereas, the new windows will not detract from the building and removal of the areaway grill will be an addition; and

Whereas, the work on the windows on the east side will clean up the visual clutter and provide a balanced secondary façade; and

Whereas, filling in the air conditioner holes on the south wall is an improvement; and

Whereas, filling in the open areaway on the north side and installing a flat sidewalk are also an improvement; and

Whereas, taking away the indentations on the upper floor of the sidewall and filling it in with masonry not only provides NYU with additional interior space but works aesthetically; now

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

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. commends NYU for its re-use of existing buildings instead of relying on new development.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 7 - 341 Bleeker Street (Christopher/W. 10th)— Greenwich Village H.D.

A vernacular style frame house with brick façade built in 1820 and later altered.

Application is to reconstruct the building. Zoned C1-6

Whereas, although the front of the building is rotating 6” towards the rear, LPC should investigate whether bracing the building is possible, rather than a total demolition; and

Whereas, if that does not appear feasible and the front façade is to be rebuilt, the bricks should not be modern-style bricks. The bricks used in these 1820s building were far from perfect. It was not until 1840 that the fabricators were able to create more perfect-appearing bricks with sharp edges, requiring thinner mortar joints. Thus, the applicant, instead of using modern bricks, should shop around for de-constructed bricks that look more like the older style: rugged, buffed, porous and irregular; and

Whereas, the original Flemish bond bricks had a pink-orange color and the new masonry should try to match that palette; and

Whereas, the proposed cornice is more appropriate to a building built after 1840, being more elaborate than this 1820 building would have had; and

Whereas, thus, the proposed cornice should be simplified by removing the dentils but adding drip molding and a fascia below the crown; and

Whereas, the rear yard addition does not protrude much into the doughnut, is partially hidden and has a rectilinear configuration - not a modernist glass façade we see requested so often; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends LPC research whether the building can be braced and saved; and

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that if preservation is not feasible, that the work should go ahead but with special attention given to assure that the new brickwork matches the original 1820 masonry in appearance and color as much as possible, and that the cornice be simplified to reflect an original cornice that an 1820 building like this would have.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on February 18, 2010, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 8 - 1 Abingdon Square, aka 607 Hudson Street (Village Nursing Home)– Greenwich Village Historic District

A neo-Federal style hotel building designed by Ralph Townsend and built in 1905.

Application is to alter entrances, install marquees, install window openings, and modify rooftop additions.

Whereas, removing the fence work, opening bricked-up windows, adding uniform basement windows, restoring the limestone detail work, making the rear roof-line more uniform, neatening the glazing and standardizing the courtyard windows all add to the building and the district; but

Whereas, the proposed marquee, although not a common element in the Village, is appropriate for a building of this era; but it is too oversized; now

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

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that the main marquee proposed at nine feet be drastically reduced to something more in scale, say, three feet - wide enough to open an umbrella; and

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. notes that the applicant provided no sightline drawings; but we accept his word that future sightline drawings will not show an increase in height or bulk from what is presently visible from the street.

Vote: Unanimous, with 37 Board members in favor.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jo Hamilton". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light blue rectangular background.

Jo Hamilton, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Sweeney". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

JH/fa

cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Thomas Duane, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Scott Stringer, Man. Borough President
Hon. Christine Quinn, Council Speaker
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Sandy Myers, CB2 Liaison, Man. Borough President's office
Lolita Jackson, Manhattan Director, CAU
Andrew Berman, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
Jenny Fernandez, Director of Government & Community Relations,
Landmarks Preservation Commission
David Reck, Zoning Committee, CB#2, Man.