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COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

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November 20, 2009

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 November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

1ST LANDMARKS MEETING

Item 1 - 54 Howard Street (n.w. Mercer)– SoHo –Cast Iron Historic District

A store and warehouse building built in 1860. Application is to alter the base of the building and install storefront infill.

Whereas, this corner building is on a narrow street surrounded by much taller buildings to the west and south. Thus, this storefront is in the shade most of the time, if not always. Hence, the purpose of these ten awnings is not to protect from the sun, since there will be none, but rather to serve as ten large advertising banners, in an attempt to counter the existing regulation that permits a mere six square-foot blade sign. One awning is too many; the ten proposed are overkill; and

Whereas, on the Mercer Street side, the door is necessary for commercial purposes, in order to provide access to a newly created store; thus the loss of historic masonry and style may be justified; but

Whereas, the other window openings should be left undisturbed, because the proposal calls for the unnecessary and wanton destruction of historic brick and limestone coursing, as well as upsetting the existing scale of the windows; and

Whereas, the historic metal bars should be preserved as well; and

Whereas, on the Howard Street side, again retailers should not egregiously alter an historic façade by destroying existing material and extending windows that are out-of-scale historically, merely to create modern-style showroom windows. They should rather be trying to restore the decrepit bulkhead underneath the existing window; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of this application, with the exception of the addition of a new door on the Mercer Street side.

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 2 - 208 West 11th Street (s.w. 7th Avenue South) – Greenwich Village Historic District
A rowhouse with Italianate-style elements built in 1856. Application is to install a painted wall sign.

Whereas, although Seventh Avenue South is a recent street, gashed out in the early part of the last century and has eclectic and idiosyncratic features, this building is a mid-nineteenth century Italianate rowhouse, where such advertising signs were never appropriate; and

Whereas, this building serves as a transition from Seventh Avenue South to the well preserved neighborhood to the west; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 3 - 263 West 12th Street (W.4th/Greenwich)– Greenwich Village Historic District

A house with a store built in 1868-1869 and a back house built in the century.

Application is to modify the facades, construct a rooftop bulkhead and railing, replace windows and install new storefront infill. Zoned R-6

Whereas, the building has been severely altered several times; and

Whereas, the renovation of the front façade of the front house basically maintains the style, materials and scale of the original building, and although the front “store” window of proposed etched glass is OK, we would prefer clear glass in keeping with all the other storefront window treatment in the Village. Perhaps the family could use interior shades or blinds for needed privacy while maintaining a more traditional glazing; and

Whereas, the required front railing on the roof is barely visible and presents no great distraction; and

Whereas, on the side façade, the reopening of the existing bricked-up window is welcomed; and

Whereas, the proposed yard gate is stylish and an improvement on the existing one; and

Whereas, on the rear building, the cleaning of the bricks on the side and the restoration of the brickwork on the rear façade adds to the building; and

Whereas, the new passageway in glass is acceptable; and

Whereas, on the front façade of the rear building, although the proposed removal of some historic material is regrettable, the existing amalgam of windows and other elements is sloppy and unappealing, the applicant is salvaging as much original material as possible, and the alteration will be barely visible from the street; now

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

Vote: Unanimous, with 39 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 4 - 628 Broadway (Houston/Bleecker)— NoHo Historic District

An office building designed by H.J. Schwarzmann & Co. and built in 1882-83.

Application is to alter storefront infill installed in non-compliance with Certificate of No Effect 06-5427.

Whereas, we agree with the applicant that the two non-historic ramps that at one time led to doorways should now be removed; but

Whereas, the cement block infill that was installed in non-compliance is brutal and detracts greatly from the building; and

Whereas, although this portion of Crosby Street was quite dodgy a decade or two ago, that situation doesn't exist currently and the covering of the fenestration with cement blocks detracts from the historic district; and

Whereas, although Crosby Street was sometimes the neglected stepchild of the more elegant Broadway fronts, this building's architect put great care in the detail, style and materials, as evidenced by the surviving cast-iron work; and

Whereas, the proposal merely to cover the violation with blackened glass, maintaining indefinitely a Potemkin Village solution, is completely unacceptable; 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 the applicant restore the rear façade of this distinguished building to the original condition as much as is possible, for example using clear glass, removing as much of the unsightly ventilation grill work as possible, and restoring the bulkhead with appropriate materials.

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

2ND LANDMARKS COMMITTEE

Item 1 - 18-20 Wooster Street (Canal/Grand)- SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District

A one-story garage altered in 1964 from a five-story building originally constructed in 1890. Application is to retain paint and a stretch banner installed pursuant to Certificate of No Effect 05-3265.

Whereas, the selection of silver paint reflects past art installations in the neighborhood and will not detract from this utilitarian building currently used as an art gallery; and

Whereas, although we usually prefer smaller banner, this banner is placed close to the building and doesn't obscure any adjacent facades, and its verticality and scale seems elegant on this plain building; 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 November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 2 - 515 Broadway, aka 513-517 Broadway (Prince/Spring)- SoHo Cast-Iron H.D.

A Queen Anne style commercial building designed by Samuel Warner and built in 1884. Application is to install storefront infill.

Whereas, the H&M signage on the window will be reduced; and

Whereas, the bulkhead below the window remains the same 18", a height in scale with the infill; and

Whereas, removing the mullions and metal framing that segmented the windows, as well as painting over of the current beige portions to a green color, will unify the facade; 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 November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 3 - 62 West 9th Street (Sixth/Fifth)- Greenwich Village Historic District

A Greek Revival style rowhouse built in 1839, with a ground floor storefront. Application is to alter the storefront.

Whereas, the dark painted wood is acceptable; and

Whereas, removing the electrical conduit is an improvement, but the proposed lighting fixtures are a bit *faux* and we would suggest something more appropriate to this style building; and

Whereas, replacing the aluminum awning with a crank retractable awning is commendable; and

Whereas, replacing the fence is likewise commendable, but we suggest a style more compatible with this 1839 Greek Revival building; but

Whereas, the black and white stonework proposed for the front patio is not in keeping with the building or the district; and

Whereas, the proposed French doors are not a style characteristic of Greek Revival buildings, and indeed are fairly recent additions to the Village. i.e. the latter half of the 20th century; so French doors would detract from the historic district and set a bad precedent, particularly for this, a side street; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial for much of this application: specifically, the black and white stonework for the front patio, the lighting fixtures, and particularly the French doors, requesting that the fixed windows be maintained, since that would be more in keeping with the character of the building.

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 4 - 827 Washington Street - Gansevoort Market Historic District

A neo-Grec style market building designed by Joseph M. Dunn, built in 1880, and altered in 1940.
Application is to install signage and lighting.

Whereas the Landmarks Preservation Commission's own publication *The Certificate of Appropriateness Public Hearing: Information for Applicants* states that "applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Community Board to arrange for review of the proposal before the public hearing"; and

Whereas the applicant did not contact the Community Board or appear before the Landmarks Committee to present this application; now

Therefore, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends denial of this application in the absence of this important step in the review process, and

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. strongly urges that, before the Commission further entertains this application, the Chair order the applicant to return and present before the community board, which the vast majority of applicants do willingly and diligently and from which obligation this applicant should not be excused, but, rather, be required to follow, lest LPC send a bad signal to the more conscientious and professional applicants who present before the Commissioners.

Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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Dear Chairman Tierney:

At its Full Board meeting on November 19, 2009, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Item 5 - 144-150 West 13th Street/161-165 West 12th Street (6th/7th Aves) – City & Country School - Greenwich Village H.D.

Application is for a rooftop addition to create a multi-purpose space on its West 13th Street properties (144-150 West 13th Street.) and for rear-yard additions to its West 13th and West 12th Street properties (161-165 West 12th Street) to improve ADA accessibility including elevators and egress, and to add new classroom space.

Whereas, there was legitimate concern and opposition from some neighbors; however, many more came out in support, both neighbors and graduates of the school; and

Whereas, we recognize the crushing problem of lack of school facilities in this neighborhood, whose classroom growth was not commensurate with its population growth; and

Whereas, this school has played a role in the history and culture of the district and the country, in fact being one of the first Progressive schools and introducing novel teaching techniques; and

Whereas, this project is being undertaken by the school itself, instead of in partnership with a private, for-profit developer, which lends it the mantle of a more community-based undertaking; and

Whereas, the plan is more successful than many of the modifications that typically come before us; and

Whereas, this building has a long history of evolution; and

Whereas, the existing fire escape and stairwell is insufficient for a burgeoning enrollment and this proposal will improve safety and handicapped accessibility; and

Whereas, on the 12th Street side there is no visible presence of the proposed changes from the street; and

Whereas, the applicant stated that the additions to the rear yard are as minimal as possible; and

Whereas, this proposal is merely a Master Plan for the future, so that the building will grow in a controlled and orderly fashion; many of these proposals may not happen for years to come, depending on funding; and

Whereas, the concept of putting the stairwell circulation on the outside of the rear façade utilizes a transparent glass structure to support the stairs and bring in light, while still revealing the original rear wall fabric; and

Whereas, the 13th Street rear façade of brick and glass is stylish, although such an expanse of glass is a bit unusual for Greenwich Village rear facades; and

Whereas, because it is a community facility, it could utilize its permitted FAR of 4.8 but gratifyingly is only proposing to build out to an FAR of 3.1. However, the allowed FAR, were it a residential building in this residential zone, would be 1.86. So, there is some cause for concern that the additions will cause nearby buildings to be dwarfed, although there are a couple of other buildings of similar scale nearby on this street; and

Whereas, we worry that it might set a precedent for community facilities to grow larger than the surrounding buildings, as witnessed at St. Vincent's nearby; and

Whereas, we question the introduction of a glass wall at the rear; it doesn't go with the rest of the building and is not characteristic of the historic district. Although it will not block the original masonry of the rear façade, it could lead us down a slippery slope, if others use this technique; and

Whereas, further, there is a real and serious problem that will result from the code-mandated bright stairwell lights shining into the rear yard doughnut and, worse, into other people's homes at all hours of the night, ruining the ambience of the surroundings; now

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

Further, be it resolved that CB#2, Man. recommends that the Commission urge the applicant to modify the rear stairwell, so as not to have the illumination intrusively invade the space of others. Perhaps directional lighting would work or soft lighting.

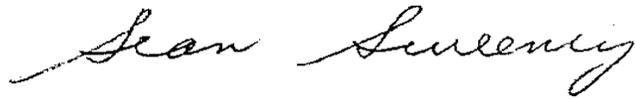
Vote: Unanimous, with 36 Board members in favor.

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. Alan Jay Gerson, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Sandy Myers, CB2 Liaison, Man. Borough President's office
Lolita Jackson, Manhattan Director, CAU
Tony Avella, Chair, Council, Land Use Committee
Peter Janosik, Council, Land Use Committee
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.