



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

JESSE BODINE
District Manager

December 7, 2015

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Terminal Stores - 220 Twelfth Avenue - West Chelsea Historic District

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

At its regularly scheduled full Board meeting on December 2, 2015, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4), on the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, voted to recommend approval, with comments, of an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an increase in height in one elevator penthouse of the Terminal Stores building in the West Chelsea Historic District.

The Terminal Stores building occupies the full block between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, between West 27th and 28th Streets, comprises 26 buildings of different heights and was designated as a landmark in 2008. An existing rooftop freight elevator penthouse is located partially on Building Four and partially on Building Six. The applicant plans to remove the Building Six freight elevator and replace it with two new passenger elevators, one of which will provide access to the roof for workers with maintenance and repair materials and equipment.

In order to accommodate the elevator mechanicals and provide roof access the applicant is seeking permission to build a painted, smooth-sided structure that would increase the height of the Building Six elevator penthouse from approximately 17 feet to 25 feet. When asked about using more historically accurate materials such as brick, the applicant replied that masonry was too heavy.

Comments

- The applicant has constructed a full size wood frame with orange plastic netting marking the size and location of the proposed penthouse. While the test structure is not visible from the surrounding streets, it is visible from the High Line to the north. In the context of the roof,

which is large and has a variety of structures of different sizes on it, the proposed elevator penthouse would not be an overly intrusive structure, but it clearly is visible.

If using brick for the extension is not possible, we request that the applicant consider painting methods and materials such as texture or scoring to make the structure blend in with its surroundings. A smooth, monolithic structure will stand out in stark contrast to the brick of the Terminal Stores building below and that of the Starrett Lehigh building beyond.

- Having had problems with roof-top open air venues elsewhere in the district, we note warily - in the absence of a stated immediate purpose - that the second passenger elevator potentially could provide roof access for more than maintenance work, such as for a lounge or club.

The Board recommends approval of the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness with the expectation that the applicant's architects will work to devise a finish that will let the expanded structure blend into its background and that the applicant will not permit roof-top uses detrimental to the community.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



J. Lee Compton
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use
Committee