



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036  
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512  
[www.nyc.gov/mcb4](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb4)

**COREY JOHNSON**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

January 4, 2012

Hon. Robert B. Tierney  
Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building, ninth floor  
One Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 421 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street**

Dear Commissioner Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 thanks the Commission for the opportunity to comment on the application for altering windows along the west façade of the existing building at 421 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

Chelsea Square, the block between 9th and 10th Avenues and 20th and 21st Streets on which the General Theological Seminary sits, is central to the Chelsea Historic District. The application is to alter fenestration on the westernmost of the three apartments into which the former Deanery, a residential building located on 20<sup>th</sup> Street in the eastern half of the campus, has been divided. The building faces to its north the glorious enclosed campus or “Close”, the central element of the major if unfortunately incomplete complex designed by Charles C. Haight in the Collegiate Gothic style towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

A representative of Beyer Blinder Bell presented to the Landmarks Committee of the Board an analysis of the existing fenestration of the building and its complex context. The goal of the application is to update this portion of the building for single-family residential use. The proposal has two parts: the first is creation of a group of new windows on the west façade; the second is removal of an existing smaller window in an upper story of the same west façade and closing the resulting opening with brick masonry to match the existing wall and window adjacent to it.

While the Board understands the reasons behind the desire for large new windows to bring in more light and air, the Board cannot approve this portion of the proposal and must recommend respecting this handsome architecture as designed.

As for the smaller window in the upper story, it was not clear if this was in the original design or added at a later date to fill a need for light and ventilation of a kitchen. It is clearly not a significant design element. The Board has no objection to removing this window and closing the opening with appropriate brick masonry.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson  
Chair



Edward Kirkland  
Co-Chair  
Landmarks Committee

[signed 1/4/2012]

Damyanti Radeshwar  
Co-Chair  
Landmarks Committee

cc: Applicant