



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

June 2, 2011

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

Re: Hearst Building Signage

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 believes this application for minor changes to the base of the Hearst Building at Eighth Avenue and West 57th Street is appropriate.

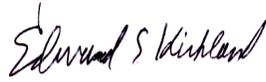
The Hearst Building has a dual importance in the panoply of the architecture of New York City, not only for the extraordinary tower by Norman Foster that is visible from afar, but also for the quite differently extraordinary base by Joseph Urban from which the tower erupts. No one knows what tower Urban might actually have designed if the chance had come – a serious search at the time of approval of Foster's structure produced no convincing result – but none was ever built, probably due to the Great Depression and management changes.

It was the hope of the Board at the time of the approval that the eccentric base would have been left as unchanged as possible in order to preserve not only the full early-20th Century character of the base but even to make the most of the contrast. Instead the decision was made to require preservation only of the general form and principal features, and thus to reduce what might well have been seen as a jarring contrast.

In this context the proposed new signage and associated changes are quite acceptable; even on the whole, a slight improvement. The small blade signs are an ingenious touch, which work to improve somewhat the transition between base and tower.

The Board urges approval as appropriate.

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4

Edward S. Kirkland
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

John D. Lamb
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

CC: applicant