

December 2, 2004

Hon. Robert Tierney
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
9 Center Street, 9th floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: 44 Ninth Avenue in the Gansevoort Historic District

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the application to replace the roof and construct new dormer windows on the roof of 44 Ninth Avenue in the portion of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. The Board has no objection to this application.

Little can be learned from the present condition at the building, which turns the corner of Ninth Avenue and 14th Street. It has dormer windows of different types scattered over the roof. None of them is actually of the form typical of late, transitional Federal buildings like these. Near the eaves there are two dormers: a small one near the north end of the property on Ninth Avenue with a single six-over-six double-hung sash with very small panes and a pediment (or gable), and a larger shed dormer at the east end on 14th Street with two very similar sashes side by side separated by a rather wide board. Well back on the roof close to and even overlapping the demising line between this building and the one to the north are two old pedimented dormers cheek by jowl, similar to each other but apparently not identical, of approximately the same width as the shed dormer and blinded by tarpaper coverings. Just before designation of the Historic District new large, unhistorical, and inappropriate dormers were constructed on the row directly to the north along a line far down on the roofs.

This brings to the issue only the intriguing presence of apparently identical small-paned sash on two dormers of very different types and the reminder that dormers are subject to frequent removal and replacement, and not necessarily in kind. In fact, historical pictures mostly from the 1930's show a full set of fair-sized dormers of the traditional pedimented type in an fairly consistent line and pattern on the whole row. Their appearance seems to indicate that they held the casement windows that were popular in the period of the photographs.

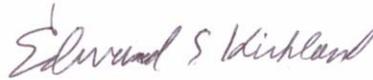
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Given this background, it seems an appropriate decision to take the historical photographs as models for new dormers with pediments and with either the casement windows frequent in the 1920's and 1930's deduced from the photographs or the widely found multi-pane double-hung sash windows associated with buildings of the early Nineteenth Century. (Most of the row now has applied muntins to give the illusion of small panes on the façade windows.) The new dormers should be placed on the replacement metal roof in a consistent pattern along the line indicated by the historical photographs.

Sincerely,



Walter Mankoff
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Edward S. Kirkland
Chair
Landmarks Taskforce

cc: Applicant
Elected Officials