



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

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.ManhattanCB4.org

**WALTER MANKOFF**

Chair

**ANTHONY M. BORELLI**

District Manager

January 6, 2005

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
One Center Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor north  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 345 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street**

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this application to raise slightly the rear wall of 345 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street in the Chelsea Historic District. The Board has no objection to the application.

It is proposed to raise the roof at the rear of the building a little less than three feet in order to make the back rooms of a fourth-floor apartment compliant with building code requirements for a minimum ceiling height of eight feet. This is required as part of a conversion of the building to apartments. 345 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street is one of a row of houses in the 300 block of West 20<sup>th</sup> Street whose much-altered rear façades are visible from West 21<sup>st</sup> Street across the playground of PS 11. The upper part of the rear façade of this building is clearly visible only in the leafless season because of a group of trees in the playground

The applicant proposes to retain the cornice, which is the main historic feature of this façade, in its present location and to slope the section of the new roof directly behind it upwards at an angle close to that of the sight lines from the street. This should make the change in roof level barely noticeable as seen straight on from West 21<sup>st</sup> Street and from the playground itself. The slight upward extension of the side walls, for which appropriate materials will be used, as well as the new roofline, will fit inconspicuously into the irregular context of the rear of these buildings, which have been variously extended and altered over time. The application appears to be appropriate.

We note that exterior doors with large amounts of glass appear to have been recently placed in the three openings at the rear of the first/parlor floor. These full-length openings may have once connected to a tea porch or tea room, as was common in row-houses of the period, or even a later balcony, but they currently have no connection to any porch, balcony, or stairs. The applicant's architect assured us there was no plan to construct any extension to which these doors might give

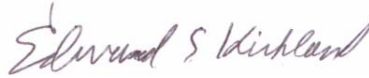
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access. We ask whether these doors have received permits. We further urge the Commission to confirm the assurance that no porch or other extension is planned.

Sincerely,



Walter Mankoff  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Edward S. Kirkland  
Chair  
Landmarks Taskforce

Cc: Elected Officials  
Applicant