



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

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

May 18, 2009

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

Re: 56 Ninth Avenue storefront, Gansevoort Market Historic District

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing about the application to modify the storefront at the Old Homestead Restaurant at 56 Ninth Avenue in the Gansevoort Market Historic District. The board has no serious objection to the proposed new storefront in itself, but believes that keeping what remains of the existing framing elements would make it more truly appropriate in this old row of brick houses at the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and 14th Street.

The contraction of the long-existing Old Homestead Steak House from its former extensive ground floor premises in this old row to the single member of the row at number 56 has required a new storefront at this address with doorways giving access to the upper floors, which will now form part of the restaurant. The storefront is to consist largely of three doorways with room only for one fixed element. The new doors resemble those in other approved storefronts in the row, and the fixed panel with its moldings echoing the form of the doorways is appropriate except for the conspicuous "Menu Box" at eye level. We believe this feature is inappropriate. There is no menu box now, and if any is to be approved, it should be inconspicuous.

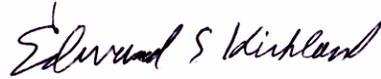
The proposal includes retaining the existing awning and the distinctive signage that forms part of the historic image of the steakhouse, which is an iconic feature of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. It does not, however, retain the historic vertical panels on the sides that reflect the old posts of the enframements of the storefronts in the row, but instead brings down the brick of the upper floors on each side of the storefront. The unifying principle of placing panels similar to the existing ones here between storefronts is general on the stores in the row to the south, where storefronts are separated by similar vertical panels, which are derived from classic pilasters but which it would be pretentious to call by that name. The only points where the brick of the upper stories comes down to the sidewalk is by doors leading to those floors. The only exception in the row is at the quite recent storefront just to the north of the one now under review at numbers 58-60, which generally follows quite different and more modern principles and which we have no record of reviewing. We believe this historic unifying principle in the row calls for retention of the existing panels beside the storefront here rather than exposing the brick.

The historic crosspiece of the storefront enframing at the address under review is largely hidden by the existing awning, above which there appears to be a significant historic molding, which at least recalls the enframing. It would thus be impractical to call for a cornice above this storefront like those topping most storefronts on the row to the south.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'Jd' in a stylized, cursive font.

Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair, Manhattan Community Board 4

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Edward S Kirkland' in a cursive script.

Edward Kirkland
Chair, Landmarks Committee

c.c.
Applicant
Sarah Carroll, Preservation Department LPC