



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

February 8, 2013

Hon. Robert B. Tierney,
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: 180 Tenth Avenue

Dear Chair Tierney,

Community Board 4 is writing in response to an application by Beyer Blinder Belle, Architects and Planners LLP for approval of proposed work at 180 Tenth Avenue, the Highline Hotel, a part of Chelsea Square, in the Chelsea Historic District.

The work consists in part of a redesign of the existing entry to the hotel from Tenth Avenue and the exit from the hotel into the Close of the General Theological Seminary. This work does not propose to alter the masonry openings at either location, but to reconfigure the doorways to conform more closely to the triple window pattern of the floors above. The materials proposed are similar to those in place.

The Board recommends approval of this portion of the application.

The application includes the introduction of a newly designed portal from the Tenth Avenue sidewalk into the landscaped courtyard directly opposite and leading to the hotel entry. The proposed portal includes the insertion of a glass and metal canopy spanning the existing opening from gatepost to gatepost, projecting approximately five feet over the sidewalk, and two and a half feet into the courtyard, creating a covered entry, and eliminating the existing gates. Illuminated signage announcing "HOTEL" is proposed to be pendant beneath the canopy.

The Board recommends approval of this portion of the application.

The application proposes changes to the landscaped courtyard, which occupies two thirds of the Tenth Avenue frontage to a depth of about 30 feet. The changes include elimination of a large part of the grassy lawns both north and south of the entry walkway. These areas are intended to be hardened, and covered with a loose gravel mix.

The Board recommends denial of this portion of the application unless the following changes are implemented:

To ameliorate the loss of valuable green space, a more modest taking of the landscaped areas are recommended. The use of “decomposed granite” as ground cover is inappropriate. A more suitable, and historically more appropriate covering for the hardened areas would be slate pavers similar to the paving of the walkway, and echoing paving within the Close, the roof of the hotel, and the sidewalk pavers around a large part of the perimeter of the Seminary, including much of the length of W. 21st St, the north side of Chelsea Square.

The application further proposes to install seven new nine foot tall gaslights around the perimeter of the courtyard, replicating the 1890’s lamp pillars seen in photographs of the period. The sense of the Board is that these will be a handsome addition to the courtyard, and will be seen from W. 20th Street as well as the Avenue.

The Board recommends approval of this portion of the application.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson
Chair



Pamela Wolff
Chair, Landmarks Committee

cc: Beyer Blinder Belle, LLP
NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn