

1 **LANDMARKS COMMITTEE**

**Item #: 8**

2  
3 April 4, 2012

4  
5 Hon. Robert B Tierney  
6 Chair  
7 Landmarks Preservation Commission  
8 Municipal Building, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
9 One Centre Street  
10 New York, NY 10007

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12 **Re: 222 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street (Chelsea Hotel)**

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14 Dear Chair Tierney:

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16 Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing about the application and presentation by the  
17 building Architect Mr. Eugene Kaufman for the proposed work at the Chelsea Hotel, a  
18 Historic New York City Hotel and a Landmark building. Built between 1883 and 1885  
19 twelve-story red-brick building was one of the city's first private cooperative apartment  
20 building. It was designed in style of Queen Anne Revival and Victorian Gothic. Among  
21 its distinctive features are the delicate, flower-ornamented iron balconies on its facade,  
22

23 The proposed work by the architect includes:

- 24 1. Replacement of Existing windows on the front façade with new wood and glass
- 25 windows matching the historical profiles
- 26 2. Replacement of Existing windows on the south façade with new aluminum and
- 27 glass windows
- 28 3. Replacement of the existing storefront on the front façade with new aluminum
- 29 and glass storefront per recently installed storefront at the donut shop approved by
- 30 the Landmarks Preservation Commission
- 31 4. Restoring and refurbishing the Hotel Chelsea sign
- 32 5. Removing the existing hotel canopy and replicating with new.
- 33 6. Addition of freestanding planter box dividers at front balconies
- 34 7. Addition of greenhouse structure attached to the southeast corner of the building
- 35 8. 3,800 sq. ft. roof top addition for commercial use on the north side, abutting the
- 36 existing occupied roof level currently occupied habitable rooms
- 37 9. Installation of two (2) new elevators in the building one of which will provide
- 38 ADA access to all floors and access to the roof to the proposed rood addition.
- 39 10. Addition of cooling tower and relocated water tanks on a new platform on the
- 40 roof

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42 **The Landmarks Committee reviewed the presentation and recommends approval of**  
43 **the following items 1 through 5:**

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45 Item no. 1. Replacement of the existing windows on the front façade with new wood  
46 and insulated glass windows made with frames and sashes in historic profiles in the

1 existing masonry openings. Applied muntins should be acceptable. Windows will be  
2 painted in the original historic paint color.

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4 Item no. 2. At the rear of the building, south elevation, replacement windows in  
5 aluminum and insulated glass matching historic profiles and painted in the original  
6 historic paint color should be acceptable.

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8 Item no. 3. The proposed replacement of the storefront matching the previously  
9 approved and installed storefront for the donut shop should be acceptable.

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11 Item no. 4. The Chelsea Hotel sign while not the original, is a neighborhood icon.  
12 Restoration and refurbishment should be acceptable.

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14 Item no. 5 Replicating the existing hotel canopy is acceptable.

15 Item no. 6. The applicant explained that the front balconies are not required for use as  
16 fire balconies and means of egress. The proposed free standing painted wood planter  
17 dividers will provide privacy between adjacent dwellings. The proposal is to paint the  
18 boxes in same color as the existing balcony railings. The committee believes the boxes  
19 will cause obstruction along the ornamental railings and diminish the importance of this  
20 historic element. It is recommended that there be a minimum clear gap of 1' between the  
21 boxes and the railings.

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23 Item no. 7. Presentation did not sufficiently address the addition of greenhouse  
24 structure at the back of the building include visibility from West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. The  
25 committee did not vote on this.

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27 Item no. 8 The proposed roof top addition will obliterate the existing landmark  
28 façade at the roof level which is set back from the front of the building on West 23<sup>rd</sup>  
29 Street. The stucco and aluminum and glass wall is not sympathetic to the existing façade  
30 that it obliterates or the front façade of the building on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and the beautiful  
31 roofscape of beautiful brick masonry and slate cladding on the “pyramid”. The committee  
32 strongly recommends that the proposed addition **SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED** for  
33 the following additional reasons:

- 34 a) The addition will be visible from West 24<sup>th</sup> Street and east side of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.  
35 b) It will cover the existing roof surface paved with original historic William A.  
36 Underhill brick pavers and contains bronze plaques embedded in the brickwork.  
37 These elements may have been part of the original landmark designation.  
38 c) Loss of Light and Air: the rooftop addition would abut the existing occupied  
39 rooftop apartments resulting in loss of light and air in these apartments.  
40 d) Additionally some tenants would lose the use of open space on the roof in front  
41 of their apartments.

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43 Item no. 9 The bulkhead over one of the proposed elevator will be visible from north  
44 side of West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Technology is available to locate the elevator machine room  
45 within the height of the structure.

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1 Item no. 10 The cooling tower platform will be visible from West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. If the  
2 new roof top structure is denied there may not be any need for the new cooling tower.  
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4 CB4 realizes that the impact of the proposed rooftop addition might have on existing  
5 tenants is not, strictly speaking, a matter for the Landmarks Commission. It is, however, a  
6 concern of this Board. CB4 has strong reservations about recommending approval for an  
7 addition which might negatively impact the quality of life of existing tenants, affect the  
8 habitability of their apartments, and curtail use of a large portion of the common area of  
9 the roof.

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11 There are several apartments on the roof itself. It is not clear to the Board what rights the  
12 tenants of those apartments enjoy under existing leases, including their right to use the  
13 roof. Nor is it clear what resolutions, if any, have been reached by any negotiations with  
14 those tenants and the new owner. The following matters are also of concern to the Board:  
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16 1. Light and Air

17 The proposed rooftop addition would abut the existing rooftop apartments. Some tenants  
18 would not only lose the use of the roof space in front of their apartments; they would  
19 have a wall in front of their window.  
20

21 2. Security

22 If a new elevator is built to bring clients to the rooftop addition, and these clients have  
23 access to the roof, how will that affect the security of the existing tenants, not only those  
24 living in rooftop apartments, but throughout the Hotel?  
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26 3. Noise

27 If the proposed rooftop addition becomes a bar, restaurant, or nightlife venue, how will  
28 the noise affect the tenants living on the roof, tenants underneath the addition, and tenants  
29 residing in adjacent buildings?  
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34 Sincerely,  
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