



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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DELORES RUBIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

September 9, 2016

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street New York, NY 10007

Re: 334 West 20th Street

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 (MCB4), at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 7, 2016, voted, by a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend denial of the revised application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for the renovation of 334 West 20th Street (334) unless the proposed rear extension to the building is eliminated or reduced significantly.

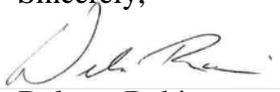
At its hearing on August 2, 2016, LPC requested a revised proposal for 334 that included the removal of the proposed rooftop addition, the rebuilding of the rear facade and the reduction of the proposed rear extension. We have reviewed the revised proposal and are pleased that the applicant has complied with LPC's first two requests. Noticeably missing, however, is the requested reduction of the rear extension. We believe that this request was warranted and urge LPC to mandate the removal or reduction of the rear extension.

The combined rear yards on this and similar blocks create a verdant oasis that is one of the principal attractions of these houses. When a house is extended to its maximum permitted footprint, as in the revised 334 proposal, the common benefit of the oasis and the light and air it provides is diminished. With the proposed extension, 334 West 20th Street would cover 64.84% of the lot, and thus would be "as of right." This does not mean, however, that it is right.

MCB4 requests that LPC act to preserve the historic character of this block. We specifically recommend that LPC consider carefully the visibility of the proposed rear extension from the sidewalk in front of St. Peter's Church and request a revised plan that mitigates this intrusion. We would prefer that the rear yard remain its current size, but we recommend that LPC at least preserve the continuity of the rear walls by permitting no addition to be built above the first story.

At a time when green space and light and air are valued so highly, it is distressing that these are endangered for all by the actions of one. We request that LPC act to preserve this common benefit.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
MCB4 Chair



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
Martin Rebholz, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Buildings