



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 31, 2019

Sarah Carroll, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street New York, NY 10007

Re: 695 Sixth Avenue: Rooftop Addition and Storefront Master Plan Modifications

Dear Chair Carroll:

On the consensus recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the Committee's meeting on July 15, 2019, Manhattan Community Board 4, at its regularly scheduled meeting on July 24, 2019, voted, by a vote of 34 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend approval of the proposal with comments as noted below.

Background

695 Sixth Avenue, the former Ehrlich Brothers Store, is located in the Ladies Mile Historic District. It was constructed in four campaigns from 1889-1911 and has facades fronting West 22nd Street, Sixth Avenue, and West 23rd Street.

Proposal

The proposal includes a rooftop addition and modifications to a ground-floor storefront master plan previously approved by the Commission.

Rooftop Addition Analysis and Recommendation

CB4 appreciates that the proposed rooftop addition is substantially smaller than allowed as-of-right by zoning and that it is deliberately shaped in response to sightlines. Most notably, it is not at all visible from the opposite side of Sixth Avenue, leaving undisturbed the building's major public face and maintaining its cornice's open relationship to the sky. Although the addition is visible above the building's 22nd and 23rd Street faces from oblique perspectives, these side-street facades are architecturally secondary and, on 23rd Street, already more varied; views of the

addition above them will often place it among taller neighboring buildings with which it will visually merge. In lowering the existing roof level by three-and-a-half feet, the impact of the three added stories is beneficially mitigated and existing roof space made usable without addition of visually distracting perimeter guardrails. CB4 recommends approval of the rooftop addition.

Storefront Masterplan Analysis and Recommendation

Proposed modifications to the Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street storefronts are minor, lowering entrances slightly to meet sidewalk level. These changes have minimal visual impact and are entirely justified by their accommodation of wheelchair accessibility. We are pleased that the previously-approved, unattractive ramp will no longer be necessary. CB4 recommends approval of these proposed modifications.

Proposed modifications to the 22nd Street storefronts are more substantial and include relocation and reconstruction of a substantial canopy to a position above the building’s proposed new main entrance. The six westernmost storefront bays on the 22nd Street façade, two of which will include the canopy, will also be altered, with glazing and doors added and sills lowered. CB4 understands that the reconstructed canopy will include replicas of its existing ornate brackets, but asks that as many of the existing brackets as possible be salvaged, restored and re-used as well. The Board does not object to the proposed changes in storefront glazing and doors, but recommends preservation of as much original ironwork in these locations as possible, and replication of its profiles in new storefront construction.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Lee Compton
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Owners/Representatives of 695 6th Avenues