



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

October 10, 2018

Hon. Fredrick Bland, Vice Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street New York, NY 10007

Re: 695 Sixth Avenue Proposed Ramp

Dear Vice Chair Bland:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the Committee's meeting on September 16th, 2018, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4), at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 3rd, 2018, voted, by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend approval of a proposed ramp at 695 Sixth Avenue in the Ladies Mile Historic District, with a suggestion for an alternative ramp design.

Background

695 Sixth Avenue, located between 22nd and 23rd Streets, is a five-story commercial building. It is made of cast-iron, stone, brick and stucco. The original building was constructed in 1889 and was designed for the Ehrich Brothers Department Store as a commercial palace. Over the years, four extensions were added.

A new tenant of the building plans to build out the space on the fourth floor. This is considered a new project by the Department of Buildings and therefore requires that the building be ADA accessible.

Description of Proposal

The entrance to the building which is on West 23rd Street has two doors, accessed by two steps. To meet ADA requirements for a barrier-free building, a metal ramp is proposed along the West 23rd Street side of the building from the western portion of the building entrance. The ramp would be 18 feet 4 inches long and 3 feet wide and made of powder-coated metal mesh with a

black aluminum guardrail. The ramp rails would be designed to conform to the frame of the building facade.

The proposed ramp would extend over the standard scored concrete sidewalk, portions of an existing steel diamond plate vault cover, and the stone and tile entrance. It will not extend along the entire width of the building entrance but would be only at the eastern portion of the entry. The ramp would have a 13 inch rise, one inch per foot.

The steel plates must occasionally be opened to allow access to the basement of the building for mechanical equipment repair or replacement. The ramp would include supporting posts that would be unbolted so the ramp could be removed to allow access to the steel plates. The owner aims to limit the removal of the ramp to weekends in order to minimize the impact on commercial tenants.

CB4 Analysis and Recommendations


CB4 suggests that the applicant consider a longer ramp with a more gentle rise of 5 percent which is preferred by people using wheel chairs. Such a ramp with protective edges would eliminate the need for railings, and thus would be less obtrusive. The applicant said they would look into this idea.

We also note that the vault was originally covered with glass vault lights, some of which remain. Though they are in poor condition, these lights have historic importance and should not be removed. Ideally they would be restored to their original condition.

The above suggestions are recommendations but are not conditions for CB4's approval of this proposed ramp which is important to provide barrier-free access to 695 Sixth Avenue.

Sincerely,


Burt Lazarin
MCB4 Chair


John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee


Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President