



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

July 29, 2011

Hon. Robert Tierney
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 493 Eleventh Avenue
New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company
Architectural Salvage and Preservation**

Dear Chair Tierney:

At the July 18, 2011 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4's ("CB4") Executive Committee, the Board discussed the Landmarks Preservation Commission's ("LPC") plans to auction off the entire contents of the Architectural Salvage Warehouse to a private bidder. CB4 requests that the LPC does not auction off the two steer heads, two ram's heads, New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company medallion, and the medallion with the year 1900 engraved on it from the former New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company (the "Slaughterhouse") on 493 Eleventh Avenue. CB4 requests that the LPC instead return these items to CB4 for architectural preservation and re-use as part of neighborhood open space.

History

The New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company was originally located at 493 Eleventh Avenue, between West 39th and West 40th Streets. The building was built in two sections; the first between 1903 and 1905 and the second between 1917 and 1919. In 1975, the then named NYC Department of General Services ("DGS"), now the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services ("DCAS"), took title to the building.

On November 8, 1985, CB4 adopted a resolution seeking preservation of the slaughterhouse by the LPC due to it being a significant building in the industrial history of the West Side. However, on May 5, 1986, DGS issued a letter stating that the Slaughterhouse had been approved for demolition. On November 6, 1986, CB4 adopted a resolution asking DGS to request that prospective developers preserve the façade of the Slaughterhouse. On April 6, 1987, CB4

adopted a resolution opposing the sale of the Slaughterhouse and again requesting the preservation of its façade. Demolition did not proceed at that time.

On August 8, 1989, CB4 adopted a resolution for preserving and reusing the Slaughterhouse. On October 26, 1989, CB4 sent DGS a proposal for redevelopment of the Slaughterhouse. The proposal included plans to renovate the Slaughterhouse as a service center for performing arts groups which would house small theatres, rehearsal studios, craft shops and offices for agents and casting directors. On December 4, 1989 DGS issued a memorandum stating that demolition was the only practicable solution to the problems the building was facing. On December 27, 1990, the Department of Buildings (“DOB”) requested an emergency demolition of the Slaughterhouse due to it being in danger of collapse. The building was demolished in 1991.

Preservation of the Cultural Artifacts

On September 27, 1991, CB4 sent a letter to LPC inquiring about the status of the two steer heads, two ram’s heads, New York Butchers’ Dressed Meat Company medallion, and the medallion with the year 1900 engraved on it from the Slaughterhouse. CB4 was informed that the items had been sent to the Architectural Salvage Warehouse until a reuse was found. Over the years, CB4 has repeatedly inquired about the status of the two steer heads, two ram’s heads, New York Butchers’ Dressed Meat Company medallion, and the medallion with the year 1900 engraved on it and requested they become incorporated as an architectural element of future open space in Community District 4. Most recently, during the Western Rail Yards negotiations, CB4 was in discussions with the Related Companies to use these cultural artifacts as part of the open space development in the Western Rail Yards.

The two steer heads, two ram’s heads, New York Butchers’ Dressed Meat Company medallion, and the medallion with the year 1900 engraved on it are part of the manufacturing and cultural history of the West Side and should not be auctioned off to a private company. The steer heads should be withdrawn as items from the Architectural Salvage Warehouse auction. CB4 will work with the local elected officials, private developers required to develop open space, and the Hudson Yards Development Corporation (“HYDC”) to find a suitable permanent location for the steer heads in public open space and an immediate location for privately financed storage. CB4 looks forward to working with the LPC to preserve these valuable cultural artifacts of the history of West Side manufacturing.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson
Chair
Manhattan CB4

Cc: Local Electeds