



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

June 9th, 2020

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

Re: 468 West 23rd Street through-wall air conditioning unit proposal

Dear Chair Carroll:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the Committee's meeting on May 18, 2020, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 3, 2020, voted by a vote of 48 in favor, 01 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend denial of the application.

The applicant is proposing the installation of a new through-wall louver for an air conditioning unit above the western parlor-floor window in the street façade of 468 West 23rd Street, an 1857 Italianate, brownstone rowhouse in the Chelsea Historic District. The exterior wall would be cut to accommodate the proposed grill which would be flush to the wall and painted to match the brownstone color.

In recommending denial of the proposal, CB4 notes that the Landmarks Preservation Commission's Rowhouse Manual states:

These units tend to be the most destructive method of air conditioning in row houses because holes must be cut into the front façade to install them, causing irreparable damage to the façade. . . . Therefore, except in rare cases, the Commission does not approve the installation of through-the-wall air conditioning units on primary or developed secondary facades of rowhouses.

The Manual continues to state that the Commission may issue a permit for such a unit on a secondary facade only if it is centered beneath a window opening. The proposed above-window location would thus not be acceptable even if it weren't on a more sensitive front façade. Cutting through exterior walls on similar buildings in Chelsea frequently results in water leakage, window deterioration and unsightly conditions.

CB4 notes that cited precedents for through-wall units in street facades of neighboring rowhouses likely predate their inclusion in the 1981 Chelsea Historic District Extension.

CB4 finds no reason for the Commission to make an exception in the case of this prominent building. We recommend that the Landmarks Preservation Commission deny this proposal.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Betty Mackintosh
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use



Paul Devlin
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use

CC: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker of the City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Owners\Representative of 468 West 23rd Street