



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 1, 2021

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

Re: 547 West 26th Street, Certificate of Appropriateness, Installation of new signage and canopy

Dear Chair Carroll:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the Committee's meeting on June 21, 2021, the Executive Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 28, 2021, ratified the Committee's recommendation to approve the proposal for a Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) Certificate of Appropriateness with certain stipulations.

MCB4 approves of the application for the canopy and new LCD signage with the condition that all signage above the arched windows is eliminated. Affixing metal letters will cause permanent, irreversible damage to the historic bricks.¹

The West Chelsea Historic District is defined by a diverse mix of commercial and industrial buildings that historically served a variety of uses and continue to serve new uses. This building will be transformed into a performing and visual arts space, as well as a community hub. MCB4 looks forward to the revitalization of this building and embraces its new uses.

The scope of work includes the installation of a new canopy, new metal-framed LCD signage, new painted lettering at street level, and new metal lettering attached above the two large arches of the street façade.

¹ Due to the LPC hearing date, this recommendation was unanimously approved by the MCB4 Executive Committee on Monday, June 28th and will be ratified at the July 28th, 2021 Full Board meeting.

- The additional canopy at the western entrance of the building corresponds well with the existing eastern entrance.
- The metal-framed LCD signage is a reasonable update to the façade to promote events inside the space.
- The painted lettering on the lower level of the façade is acceptable.

MCB4 has no objection to these scope items.

The installation of metal lettering at the upper heights of the facade is problematic.

Standoffs for the proposed signage's 30 cutout letters would require drilling over 100 holes into the brickwork -- not a reversible action. The result would be a permanent impact on the appearance of the building. Alternatively anchoring only into brick joints would require an impractical level of precision and unacceptably risk damage to bricks.

The applicant stressed the need for building identification that is visible from across the street, and unblocked by people queuing up to enter events. We believe this doesn't justify permanent damage to an historic building.

We recommend that the applicant explore alternative signage including reintroduction of banners on existing facade brackets, which would not further damage historic brickwork and would be visible from the full length of the street.

Subsequent to our Chelsea Land Use Committee meeting, the applicant proposed a method to affix letters to the facade by inserting pins only into the joints, and not into the bricks. We appreciate the applicant's suggested efforts to preserve the historic bricks. If this method proves feasible, we would support it.

We appreciate all the work LPC puts into protecting the great assets of the West Chelsea Historic District.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Betty Mackintosh
Co-chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Paul Devlin
Co-chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director NYC LPC
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Representatives of 547 West 26th Street