



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

424 West West 33 Street, Suite #580
New York, NY 10001

tel: 212-736-4536
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

February 7, 2023

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

**Re: The McGraw-Hill Building, 330 West 42nd Street
Modifications to Exterior Alterations**

Dear Chair Carroll,

On January 11th, 2023, at Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee meeting, historical preservation consultants from Higgins Quasebarth & Partners ("Project Team") presented proposals for a modified scope of work to the landmarked exterior of McGraw-Hill Building at 330 West 42nd Street.

The modifications, which would require an amendment to the existing certificate of exterior alterations, are being proposed in order to accommodate the building owner's ("Ownership") plan to convert the upper floors of the building to residential use while retaining the lower floors for commercial use.

The proposed modifications include:

- Modifying the existing main entry to make it the Residential Entrance, increasing the door height, and adding a marquee;
- Changing the address of the Residential Entrance from 330 to 328;
- Restoring some of the McGraw-Hill signage over the Residential Entrance;
- Creating a new Commercial Entrance in one of the existing storefront bays with 330 as the address; and,
- Adding new terrace doors and partitions on the 16th and 32nd floor terraces.

At its February 1st, 2023, regularly scheduled Full Board meeting, MCB4 with 34 in favor, 7 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible, voted to thank the Project Team for its thorough and lucid presentation and to recommend approval of the proposed modifications with three conditions:

1. Ownership keep 330 West 42nd Street as the address for the entire building, including both the Residential Entrance and the Commercial Entrance;
2. Ownership consider installing a storefront entrance on West 41st Street, enlarging the sidewalk, and adding planting beds along the West 41st Street sidewalk; and,
3. Ownership look at the guidelines developed by the Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance (BID) for tree pit design when they add trees and beds to the West 42nd and West 41st Streets sidewalks.

HISTORY

A New York City Landmark, a United States National Historic Landmark, and one of the great examples of 1930's International Style architecture, the McGraw-Hill building on West 42nd Street is a through-block building located at the south side of West 42nd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. It is a building to which the word "iconic" can be applied without hesitation and without pretension.

Rising 34 stories above West 42nd Street, with setbacks on the north and south elevations on the 11th, 16th, 32nd, and 34th floors, the building's top is crowned by 11-foot high letters that spell "McGraw-Hill," the sight of which for three-quarters of a century, has been a beacon for the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. The building was designed to accommodate manufacturing on the lower floors, while the upper floors were designed to accommodate office space with smaller floor plates.

With alternating horizontal bands of double hung windows and blue-green terra-cotta blocks composing all four facades of the building, the building's unique design was innovative at the time and remains a vibrant and esteemed presence on the West Side.

Designed by Raymond Hood, an architect who was also the lead architect designing Rockefeller Center, and opened in 1932, the same year the Empire State Building, it is one of the most notable modernist buildings in a city renowned for its 20th Century architecture.

In January of 2021 the same Project Team presented a proposal for some alterations at the exterior of the building to the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee and at its February 3rd, 2021, regularly scheduled Full Board meeting, MCB4 voted to recommend approval of the proposed changes to the West 42nd and West 41st Streets ground floor facades and to the terraces. In response to Board concerns, Ownership agreed to retain the historic McGraw-Hill sign at the top of the building.

PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The exterior modifications are being proposed in order to accommodate a plan to adapt the building for residential as well as commercial uses. That plan envisions adapting floors 12 through 34 for residential use. It is envisioned that approximately 224 rental apartments, studio and one-bedroom units with work from home areas, would be created. Floors 1 through 11 will remain commercial with retail space along the West 42nd Street frontage.

The Project Team notes that these upper floors are uniquely adaptable to residential use because they were originally designed to house the McGraw-Hill offices, with more access to natural light than on the lower floors, which were intended for manufacturing and printing uses.

The proposed modifications to the exterior include:

Residential Entrance — Making the center entry the Residential Entrance.

Doors — Increasing the height of the doors by 10 inches to provide more openness for entryway.

Marquee — Installing a projecting cantilevered marquee over the Residential Entrance.

McGraw-Hill Sign — Restoring the McGraw-Hill sign above the Residential Entrance.

New Address — Changing the address of the Residential Entrance from 330 West 42nd Street to 328 West 42nd Street.

Commercial Entry — Modifying the westernmost storefront bay for use as a new Commercial Entrance.

Infill — Adding new bronze infill and extra height to the Commercial Entrance.

New Address — Making 330 West 42nd Street the address of the Commercial Entrance.

Wayfinding — Adding a projection above the Commercial Entrance of ten inches with six-inch letters for wayfinding.

(The Project Team notes that both of the building's entrances will be ADA accessible providing push buttons to open doors for full access.)

Terraces

Doors — Installing additional doors at the two terraces on the 16th and 32nd floors by modifying existing window openings and lowering the sills at each new doorway.

Partitions — Installing six-foot high partitions aligned with each of the piers for privacy between terrace units of adjacent apartment units.

MCB4 understands that the interior of the building is not landmarked but is grateful to learn that all of the historic fabric of the lobby has been identified, removed, and stored, and that Ownership's intent in the design and planning is to see that those components are integrated into the construction of the residential, as well as the commercial, lobbies. The Board is also gratified to learn that the height of the lobby will not be changed.

MCB4 CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

MCB4 commends Ownership and Project Team for their thoughtful analysis and attention to detail in their proposals to modify portions of the building's exterior. The Board recommends approval of the proposed modifications with the following conditions:

1. **Keep 330 West 42nd Street the address for the entirety of the building** — 330 West 42nd Street is the address the building has been known as since it was built 90 years ago. It was considered such an important address that consideration had been given to replacing the iconic, historic McGraw-Hill sign atop the building with the numbers 330. Changing the Residential Entrance address to 328 seems neither an improvement nor a necessity since wayfaring signage could easily make it clear that the Commercial Entrance just west of the Residential Entrance is part of the building. The Board strongly recommends keeping 330 as the building address for the Residential Entrance as well as the Commercial Entrance.

2. **Add a West 41st Street Entrance** — The Board notes that the Port Authority is starting this year on its Terminal replacement and when completed, West 41st Street is going to be a very active Street. Rather than waiting and coming back with another amendment to the present plan, Ownership should look at the West 41st Street storefronts and consider making the entrance to the West 41st Street storefront space as inviting as the proposed West 42nd Street Commercial Entrance.

3. **"Green" The Sidewalk areas** — The Board recommends that Ownership commits to tree and planting bed installations on the West 42nd Street and West 41st Street sidewalks, not just as an afterthought but as a part of the present proposed plan, to insure this great, renovated Landmark is an asset not only to the residents but also to the larger community. The Board encourages Ownership to expand the West 41st Street sidewalk and look

at the Streetscape guidelines developed by the Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance (BID) for tree pit design, including size and tree pit guards.

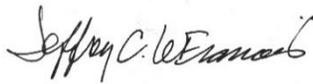
CONCLUSION

The Board commends the Project Team and Ownership for their thoughtful plan to renovate this iconic landmark and thanks them for their openness in hearing and addressing our concerns.

Built around the same time as New York's other iconic Art Deco landmarks, including the Chrysler Building (1928-1930), the Empire State Building (1932), and Rockefeller Center (1930-1939), the McGraw-Hill building is a reminder, as one architectural historian put it, of the "the brash glamour of the city at its most confident, optimistic, and sophisticated."

It's just that kind of confidence and optimism the City needs now.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board



Jean Daniel Noland
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee



Paul Devlin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

CC: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congress
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Tony Simone, New York State Assembly
Hon. Erik Botcher, City Council
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Higgins Quasebarth & Partners
Historic Districts Council