



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

June 2, 2011

Hon. Robert B. Tierney
Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, ninth floor
One Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

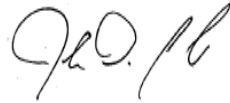
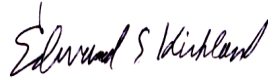
**Re: 343 West 20th Street
Chelsea Historic District**

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 has long been concerned by the lack of effective regulation of the rear facades of the row houses on the middle of the 300 block west of 20th Street in the Chelsea Historic District. These facades have long been exposed to public view by the demolition years ago of two commercial buildings and their replacement by public open space, which eventually became the playground of Public School 11, located directly to its east. As has been discussed in earlier communications by CB4, these facades have not received much attention by the owners, the community, or the city; and people looking at the group find it hard to believe that it is part of a historic district. Among these reasons is the fact that a number of trees in the playground and the backyards of the buildings, and when growth is lush, as this year, it is indeed difficult to see some sections of these facades except in the open space.

Examination of the very limited materials presented by the applicant at the end of a long meeting of the Landmarks Committee and visit to the playground nevertheless make it clear that the requirements of the certificate of Appropriateness have not been followed in the windows and the parapet. We wish to take this opportunity to thank the Commission for its care in reviewing this application and to urge it to enforce compliance with its requirements. The application for legalization should be denied, and we hope this will be a first step in the process of restoring and enforcing historic character on these very visible rear facades. The Board recognizes that this will not be an easy task, but the recently reinvigorated Landmarks Committee pledges to do its best to collaborate in the effort.

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4

Edward S. Kirkland
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

John D. Lamb
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

CC: applicant