



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

May 4, 2011

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

Re: 338 West 22nd Street

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing about the application for restoration and alteration of the townhouse at 338 West 22nd in the Chelsea Historic District. The Board believes that this proposal will largely bring restoration of this significant building, but that a few minor changes, largely in black, would make the application more fully appropriate.

338 West 22nd Street is one of a largely intact row of Greek Revival townhouses on the south side of the block of 22nd Street, to construct a significant addition on the rooftop of the building, and to make considerable changes to the historic rear of the building. These changes cannot be seen from the street but will be visible from locations in the rear within the real if altered and broken-up enclosed interior space of the historical "doughnut."

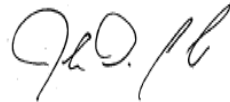
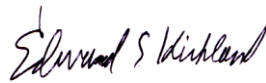
In front the stoop and the doorway above were long ago removed and replaced with a badly patched-up entrance at the basement level. This is only part of the pre-designation alterations—the window trim was drastically simplified, the long Greek Revival windows at the parlor floor were shortened, and the original iron work and cornice lost. These elements are to be restored or replaced based on corresponding features of the immediate neighbors on the row. These are especially reliable models, since the buildings of the group were built in the same few years by owners named "Smith," probably all brothers. We note that in the drawings of the applicants' proposal presented to the committee, some of the historic windows appeared without the trim and the 6/6 windows all but certainly original to the building. The applicant responded that the actual historic conditions would be maintained or reproduced, and the Board emphasizes that restoration of the historic condition in these locations is essential for the proposal to be appropriate.

The application also includes a major addition on the top of the historic roof, which will be slightly altered in front. Mockups and a site visit seem to confirm that the addition will be barely

visible, if at all, from any point on 22nd Street to the front or 21st Street to the rear. It will, however, be visible from the rear if limited “doughnut” (formally the enclosed space behind the building row) and will visually dominate the historic top story in the rear of the townhouse is to be preserved, but in this case it will be located between the prominent new addition above the wall of the second floor below, which will be altered to create a porch.

The strong visual presence of the addition, set back only 1’6” from the historic rear wall below, will considerably diminish the visual force o the retention of the historic third story just below. To mitigate this impact on the wall the addition should be set somewhat further back to distinguish it more clearly from the historic story below. To strengthen the historic presence further we recommend that the porch proposed for the second floor level should be left open and not be enclosed by a trellis as shown, and that only one of the three windows giving onto the proposed porch at the second floor should be lengthened and converted to a doorway instead of all three. Full terraces of the type proposed at this second- floor level as well as at the third would give the remaining original wall a chance of holding its own against the new addition above and the usual modern extensions at and below the parlor floor.

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4

Edward S. Kirkland
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

John D. Lamb
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

CC: applicant