



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DELORES RUBIN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

January 13, 2017

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building, 9th floor  
One Centre Street New York, NY 10007

**Re: 438 West 20<sup>th</sup> Proposed Alterations**

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the committee's meeting on December 19, 2016, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4), by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, recommended approval of an application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for front and rear alterations not affecting area or bulk to 438 West 20th St., a row house in the Chelsea Historic District.

The Chelsea Historic District Designation Report states that 438, 440 and 442 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street "were built in the Italianate style in 1853-54" and states: "These houses are the most authentic examples of this type of two-bay English-basement dwelling in the Chelsea Historic District."

The three were clearly conceived and built as a uniform row of identical houses, unified below a continuous cornice and behind a continuous, ornate front garden fence which still stands before 440 and 442. The resulting English terrace effect makes a more impressive unit of these modest houses, to which the exactness of their repetition contributes.

CB4 has no objection to the proposed new brick cladding or railing replacement at the rear of the house, but approves with reservation the proposed alteration of the house's front entry. Ideally, it would match those of its row mates, 440 and 442, which appear to be original and which still match each other. Under an earlier renovation, 438's original paired doors were replaced with a single door simulating the paired doors of 440 and 442 but operating as a single leaf. It is unfortunate that the proposed replacement door, simulating a single leaf with sidelights, is a step further from the original group's appearance and more in keeping with broader-proportioned, three-bay houses on the block in the Greek Revival rather than Italianate style. However, 438's entrance door is not original, the original door frame will be retained, and the Board notes the applicant's stated need to negotiate the entrance with strollers. It is to be hoped that once this

need has passed, the original paired doors will be restored in kind with those of its row's neighbors and that one day the front fence will also be restored in front of 440 to complete the originally-intended bracketing of the three houses as an impressive architectural unit.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Anne R. Goulet, ARGitct, LLC