



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DELORES RUBIN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

May 4, 2017

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

**Re: 318 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street: Certificate of Appropriateness for Alterations and Additions**

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, following a duly noticed public hearing at the committee's meeting on April 17, 2017, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4), at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 3, 2017, voted, by a vote of 24 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to **recommend approval** of the application for alterations to the front façade, a rooftop extension and cellar/backyard excavation but to **recommend denial of the application for** a rear extension in an application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for 318 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

Background

The building at 318 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street, which is located in the Chelsea Historic District, is a four-story townhouse built in 1837. The house was built in the Greek Revival style and retains some of its original features. It is a 25-unit Single Row Occupancy (SRO) that will be converted to a single family dwelling. The building received a Certificate of No Harassment in October 2016.

The applicant proposes i) to restore the building's front brick façade and wrought iron railings, and replace the windows in kind. ii) To add a one story penthouse to the roof along with mechanical equipment and two bulkheads, one for an elevator and one for a staircase. iii) To excavate the existing cellar (24 inches) to an eight foot ceiling height, and to excavate the rear yard about 36 inches to bring it to the same level as the other nearby yards. iv) To add a four-story full-width rear addition which would extend eleven feet into the exiting rear yard. The required 30-foot rear yard would remain.

All of the proposed additions would be within the floor area permitted by zoning.

CB4 Analysis and Recommendations

CB4 supports and recommends approval of the applicant's proposed restoration of the building's front façade and railings which will enhance its historic appearance.

CB4 recommends approval of the proposed rooftop addition, which, based on views of the mock-up of the proposed penthouse, will not be visible from the street. However, we urge the applicant to minimize the height of the bulkhead and staircase so the addition will be less visible to neighbors living on the third and fourth floors of adjacent buildings.

CB4 also supports the backyard and cellar excavations, and encourages the applicant to take all appropriate precautions during the excavations to ensure the safety of neighboring buildings.

CB4 recommends denial of the application for the four-story extension at the rear of the building. While the extension is as-of-right, the proposed rear extension would violate a long-established, consistent rear façade line among contiguous buildings and diminish the historic open space within the core of the block. Residents cherish this private open space and speak of their enjoyment of the light and air, greenery, trees and birds in this "oasis." We support their desire to maintain this private open space.

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: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council