



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.ManhattanCB4.org

J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

MICHELLE SOLOMON
Acting District Manager

April 6, 2006

Hon. Robert B. Tierney, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: 136 West 18th Street

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 thanks you for this opportunity to comment on the application for alterations to the façade of 136 West 18th Street, a somewhat separate but largely intact element of the designated West 18th Street Stables. After a thorough presentation by the architect on March 30th, 2006, the Landmarks Task Force of the Board voted without dissent to recommend general approval while recommending study of one minor modification to the proposed show window. At its regular meeting on April 5 the full Board voted to support this letter embodying the Task Force recommendation. The preservation of this group of buildings, whose integrity is threatened in this rapidly changing area, has long been a concern of the Board.

The proposal is to remove the relatively recent infill that currently fills in the large ground-floor entrance that can be seen on such photographs of the building as the tax photographs of about 1940. This infill, a sort of reduced version of the central element of the second floor, is pleasantly hokey but without any historic relationship to the design of the building as a whole or to the original first floor. The void thus reopened is to be filled by a large glass show window, set roughly a foot and a half back of the building front and occupying the entire opening, and fitted with recessed lighting and security behind the glass. The window will form a modern element clearly reflecting the early 20th century opening dating from the automobile era and will join other windows in the row that allow the adaptive reuse of the ground floor as a store. The belt course still partially present at the top of the ground floor is to be extended across the top of the opening. The Board approves this proposal as appropriate with one concern of detail.

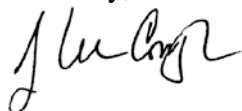
When automobiles replaced horses and carriages, the larger scale of the new vehicles led to widening of most of the openings that formed the wide central element in the original tripartite design of the street floor of each member of the group of stables. In number 136, as in some others, this widening led to the total loss of one side element, the one containing a narrow window, leaving only the narrow doorway on the other side of the opening to recall the original design at the street level. This application makes no change to this condition.

Hon. R. Tierney

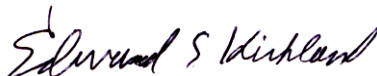
Page 2 of 2

The Board notes, however, that this enlarged opening in no way reflects the original tripartite division of the building, but rather perpetuates the current asymmetrical state of the ground floor and leaves the clearly marked pier above the window visually unsupported at ground level. We recommend that the large window be restudied with a view to reflecting at ground level, perhaps by some indication on the glass, the existence of the pier and of the tripartite design that is shared by the surviving members of the original group of stables and is still visible at the second floor of this building.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Edward S. Kirkland
Chair
Landmarks Taskforce

cc: Manhattan Borough President
Local elected officials
applicant