



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

June 6, 2012

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

**Re: 333 West 20th Street
Chelsea Historic District**

Dear Chair Tierney,

Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing about the application by the building architect, Harry Gutfreund for approval of proposed work at the referenced site.

Work includes complete brick-to-brick re-fenestration at the front, south, elevation, elimination of one window at the cellar level on the south elevation; and the complete demolition of the existing rear, north, elevation extension, to be replaced with an increased five-foot deep extension from grade to fourth floor, with a set-back at the fifth floor to include a deck with iron guardrail, and a terrace at the parlor level with spiral stair to the rear yard, all occupying full width of the 25 foot lot.

The Committee approves the work at the south façade, including the elimination of the window at the cellar level.

The Committee approves the work at the north elevation with recommendations, as described below.

The Landmarks committee commends the applicant for his careful and clear presentation.

This property, built in approximately 1855, appears to have undergone a complete façade replacement and the addition of a fifth floor in approximately 1898 to 1900. It is this newer red brick façade that became part of the Historic District. The building retains its handsome cornice, and has its own aesthetic though it no longer boasts the high front stoop it must have worn when new, and now has an entry in the fashion of a French flat. No work other than window replacement is contemplated at the south elevation.

It is noted that the brick façade, though in good shape, is mottled and would benefit from cleaning.

The Landmarks Committee approves the double-hung window with single vertical muntin creating two-light sash, and molding replacement as shown on the plans submitted, and accepts the elimination of the cellar window as reasonable and inconsequential. Replication of the columnar molding detail at every window adds interest and grace to an otherwise plain façade, and will be handsome in black against the red brick.

The demolition and expanded replacement of the north façade extension, which faces the back of the PS11 playground and is visible from 21st Street in the leafless season presents some concerns. It is proposed to be full width of the building, eliminating one vertical row of windows at the west side which are set back. The result is a monolithic slab. The committee is concerned that this new construction will be visually jarring. The architect offers utilizing an antiqued common brick that approximates the look of the existing rather than attempting to clean and re-use the original. Ultimately the Committee concluded that this approach was not feasible since not enough material would survive, and because the current addition is not original to the building in any case. The Committee recommends brick coursing to follow the pattern of the existing where every fifth course was a tie brick. This can be accomplished by using half brick in contemporary cavity wall construction. The Landmarks Committee recommends approval of the plan with this recommendation.

The committee does not approve the iron railing design as shown at the fifth floor terrace and would prefer to see the simpler design of the railing at the roof parapet.

The committee does not approve the stucco finish at the fifth floor setback. We would prefer to see the top floor finished with the same antiqued brick proposed for the rest of the extension.

The parlor floor terrace is not seen from 21st Street due to the ten-foot high brick wall at the rear of the yard and vegetation at the rear of the playground.

Sincerely,

Corey Johnson
Chair

Pamela Wolff
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

Damyanti Radeshwar
Co-Chair
Landmarks Committee

cc: Applicant