



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.ManhattanCB4.org

JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

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

April 3, 2009

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

Re: 156 Ninth Avenue storefront

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing in support of the application for a new store-front at 156 Ninth Avenue in the Chelsea Historic District as presented by the architects to the Landmarks Committee of the Board at its meeting on March 17, 2009.

This storefront is one of a series occupying the ground floor of a row of vernacular townhouses on the southern portion of the east block front of Ninth Avenue between 19th and 20th Street. The storefronts in the row have been much altered, with or without permits, since the original construction in 1852, but with few exceptions reflect the dominant form in such locations in Chelsea and the Historic District: a cladding covering the historic brownstone enframing and enclosing large undivided plate-glass windows at or very close to the building line and with entrances mostly in the center. Colors and details vary considerably.

Directly to the north of 156 are two storefronts with central entrances under modillioned cornices and with projecting windows over bulkheads set back from the rest of the front:

Number 158, a wooden front of uncertain date with a modillioned cornice and large undivided windows projecting significantly beyond the building line; and

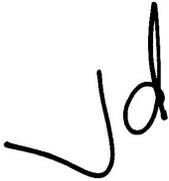
Number 160 (not a member of the row), a more recent design with a similar cornice and divided windows projecting only to the building line.

At 154 to the south of 156 is a more typical front for the block in which, however, the cladding has been removed over much of the enframing, especially on the crosspiece, revealing its original color.

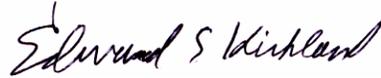
The proposal is to replace the very plain storefront of the existing Laundromat at 156 with its large windows by a front of the general pattern of the two to the north, with large undivided windows flanking a central entrance and projecting to the building line, all under a cornice of a modillioned design based on the two stores just to the north. The wooden materials are to be painted a dark color similar to those in typical storefronts, and exposed brownstone will be restored and similarly painted, as has been the historic practice.

This will produce a handsome and appropriate design closely based on nearby precedents. As businesses turn over, it can be hoped that such care for design may encourage other owners to follow more closely historic precedents and create a truly attractive row. In this context it might be explored if revealing the brownstone enframements in their original color has true historic precedents for storefront design in environments of this type.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a smaller 'd'.

Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair, Manhattan Community Board 4

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style that reads 'Edward S Kirkland'.

Edward Kirkland
Chair, Landmarks Committee

c.c.
Applicant
Ms. Sarah Caldwell, Preservation Department, LPC