



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

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

May 18, 2009

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

Re: 547 West 27th St./548 West 48th Street, West Chelsea Historic District

Dear Chair Tierney:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is writing about the proposed storefront infill and stretch banners on the building at 547 West 27th Street/548 West 28th Street in the West Chelsea Historic District. The board is disappointed that the proposed storefront and placement of banners were not only presented in insufficient detail and accuracy to the Landmarks Committee at its meeting on April 21st to justify a finding of appropriateness for these features but also raised issues about work already done.

The first element of the application is the storefront infill proposed for tenants on the ground floor, presumably mostly galleries. Since this building was historically an envelope factory and later a warehouse, loading docks have historically occupied much of the ground floor bays on the two streets, and it is these bays that are expected to receive the bulk of the storefront infill. The presentation to the committee was of a ground floor plan showing no more than the locations of probable storefront infill and a few small photographs of storefronts that appeared to have been constructed. It was unclear whether these were grandfathered or had been constructed without proper permits. While the locations of the infill appeared to be appropriate, the images of glass and metal storefronts lacked the detail required to determine if they were appropriate in design and materials in their locations on a historically industrial building.

The second element was the location of the stretched banners proposed for identifying and publicizing the galleries expected to occupy locations within the building. The presentation consisted of two boards showing the proposed locations on the two street façades of the building showing the proposed locations of the stretched banners on the façades and one or two photographs showing a street with one or two banners. The proposed locations of the banners on the centers of each major pier of both façades, indicated on the boards by dotted lines linking circles showing the locations of the bases of the supporting poles on every pier, seemed appropriate, if perhaps excessive in number on walls bearing the fine tie-rod plates that are the most distinctive features of the building.

A site visit shortly after the meeting showed several examples of metal storefronts already in place on the building. They seemed ingenious in design but perhaps not fully appropriate to their

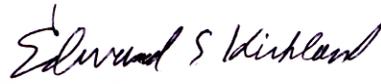
surroundings. A surprise was the number of already erected stretched banners, three on the 27th Street façade and one on 28th Street. It was clear the only photograph of the banners shown at the presentation was of the 28th Street façade. The heavy poles varied both in detail and above all in location, which at best followed only approximately the locations specified on the presentation boards. They also varied in length and vertical placement as well as in style, and thus produced a confused appearance on the elegant building.

For these reasons Community Board 4 recommends denial of the application as shown and asks for regularization of the situation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jean-Daniel Noland, consisting of the initials 'Jd' in a cursive style.

Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair, Manhattan Community Board 4

Handwritten signature of Edward Kirkland in a cursive style.

Edward Kirkland
Chair, Landmarks Committee

c.c.

Applicant

Sarah Carroll, Preservation Department LPC