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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

January 22, 2025

Honorable Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
One Center Street, 9th Floor  
New York, New York 10007

**RE: 945 Madison Avenue: Former Whitney Museum of American Art (Upper East Side Historic District) – PBDW Architects** – A modern style building designed by Marcel Breuer and constructed in 1966. Application is to create a new elevator bulkhead on the roof and new entry signage lighting.

Dear Chair Carroll,

**WHEREAS** 945 Madison Avenue has been calendared for possible designation as an individual and interior landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission; and

**WHEREAS** 945 Madison Avenue is the former home of the Whitney Museum and has been acquired by Sotheby's for use as an auction house and administrative offices; and

**THIS APPLICATION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: Part A — The new elevator and elevator bulkhead and the new signage, Part B — The new lighting and ceiling treatment of the existing marquee (canopy)**

**Part A – The New Elevator and Elevator Bulkhead and the New Signage**

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on January 15, 2025, the Board approved **Part A** of the following resolution by a vote of 39 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

**WHEREAS** this application has been split into two parts for the purposes of the resolution – the new elevator and elevator bulkhead and the new signage are taken together as the first part; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed elevator will replace an existing elevator that only served the first floor and the basements, requiring exhibition/auction material entering the building to go down to the basement before being delivered to the display galleries; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed elevator will serve all floors and allow for the more direct loading of exhibitions; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed elevator bulkhead on the roof will be 10'-3" taller than the adjacent egress stair bulkhead and 18' square; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed bulkhead will sit at more or less the center of the east demising wall and will be visible only from a stretch of the north side of 75th Street from mid-block to just east of Park Avenue; and

**WHEREAS** the applicants propose to continue the board-formed concrete of the existing demising walls both on the east and south and to continue the pattern and directionality of the other roof structures; and

**WHEREAS** the bulkhead will present a minimal change to the overall appearance of the building; and

**WHEREAS** several members of the public and the Committee noted that the change in use from a museum to an auction house will significantly increase the number of deliveries and urged that the applicants come before other appropriate committees in order to clarify this issue; and

**WHEREAS** the applicants propose a minor change to the entry signage on Madison Avenue; and

**WHEREAS** the applicants propose to add black-painted cut-out metal letters to the lower frame of the existing poured concrete vitrine at the Madison Avenue entrance; and

**WHEREAS** the letters will be 8” high and will be attached to the vitrine on the underside of the vitrine at an existing concrete joint; and

**WHEREAS** the letters will be rear illuminated by the use of dimmable LEDs; and

**WHEREAS** the display panel will be lit using existing fixtures mounted within the vitrine; and

**WHEREAS** the changes to the signage and vitrine lighting will be minimal;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Part A of this application is **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**.

**Part B – The New Lighting and Ceiling Treatment of the Existing Marquee (Canopy)**

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on January 15, 2025, the Board approved **Part B** of the following resolution by a vote of 24 in favor, 15 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

**WHEREAS** this application has been split into two parts for the purposes of the resolution – the new lighting and ceiling treatment of the existing marquee (canopy) is taken as the second part; and

**WHEREAS** the applicant proposes to add LED strip lighting to the underside of the existing marquee/canopy and to lighten the surface of the underside with a “wash” of acrylic paint to brighten the entrance; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed “wash” will be readily reversible and will not obscure the board-formed pattern of the surface; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed lighting will be powered from an existing conduit; and

**WHEREAS** the Committee noted that there are no other painted concrete surfaces on the building exterior; and

**WHEREAS** the Committee noted that a sensitive and thorough cleaning of the canopy (and indeed the entire visible concrete structure) will brighten the underside of the marquee/canopy as can be seen in the photos dating from the building’s construction; and

**WHEREAS** notwithstanding the applicants’ good intentions and sensitivity to the existing structure, the Committee believes that this intervention will upset the balance between the bare exterior and the brightly lit lobby within;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Part B of this application is **DISAPPROVED AS PRESENTED**.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

*Valerie S. Mason*

Valerie S. Mason  
Chair

*Anthony Cohn and David Helpern*

Anthony Cohn and David Helpern  
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York  
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District  
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District  
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District  
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District  
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District  
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District

Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District  
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8<sup>th</sup> Council District