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## The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

October 20, 2014

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivan , Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building  
One Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 1010 Park Avenue (between 84th and 85th Streets) [Park Avenue Christian Church & Annex]- Park Avenue Historic District**

Dear Chair Srinivan:

At the Full Board meeting on Wednesday, October 15, 2014, the board adopted the following resolution regarding **1010 Park Avenue (between 84th and 85th Streets) [Park Avenue Christian Church & Annex]- Park Avenue Historic District – John H. Beyer, Architect-** Church in the gothic revival style designed by Ralph Adams Cram, Bertram Goodhue and Frank Ferguson in 1909. Annex is no-style building originally constructed in 1909 and altered by Merrill & Holmgren in 1963. Application is to demolish the Annex and construct a new building containing Church facilities and apartments on the Annex site and to add a new accessible entrance to the Church on E.85th Street.

**WHEREAS** the church was designed in the Gothic revival style by Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson and completed in 1911; its design was inspired by features on La Sainte-Chapelle in Paris including its 70' spire or fleche.

**WHEREAS** the Annex (Parish House) was originally completed in 1911 and served as the church rectory; in 1963 it was altered by Merrill and Hultgren into a 5-story church facility that pushed back from the street wall and essentially replicated the historic façade.

**WHEREAS** as part of their 1963 alteration Merrill & Hultgren chose to incorporate part of the original 1911 elevation into the existing annex at the southern end of the façade with its distinctive two-story oriel window.

**WHEREAS** the recent designation of the Park Avenue Historic District includes the church but refers to the Annex as having "no style" even though the front elevation is designed in the Gothic revival style to match the adjacent church.

**WHEREAS** the applicant, Extell Development Company, proposes to demolish the 45' wide existing annex and construct a 150' high, 16-story building; the first three floors will be a community facility to be used by the church and the 13 stories above will be residential.

**WHEREAS** the applicant maintains that the design of the new building will mimic characteristics of other residential apartment buildings along Park Avenue within the new Park Avenue Historic District including maintaining a rigorous street wall and setbacks above the 13-story cornice line.

**WHEREAS** in addition to having setbacks at the top two floors, there will be a further setback for the rooftop mechanical equipment so that the top of the building presents the wedding cake design that crown other Park Avenue apartment buildings in the district.

**WHEREAS** the applicant maintains the proposed building is also influenced both by the Gothic revival design of the 1915 Emery Roth apartment building which abuts the site to the south and the verticality of the expression of the church to the north.

**WHEREAS** as a result of these additional influences, the proposed building includes design elements such as projecting vertical pilasters that run up the length of the building in order to create shadows and punched-in windows.

**WHEREAS** at the crown [the top two stories plus the mechanicals], the setbacks are sculpted to emulate the buttresses (projecting supports of stone) at the church and the projecting vertical pilasters are recessed.

**WHEREAS** the applicant proposes to clad the building in large Indiana limestone which will present as vertical in expression.

**WHEREAS** the base of the building will be articulated with limestone cornices at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

**WHEREAS** there will be a modest one-story entrance with a fabric awning in contrast to the two-story entrance to the church; there is a door on either side of the front entry door – one to the left to be the service entrance to the residential part of the building and one to the right to serve as the entrance to the 3-story community facility.

**WHEREAS** there will be a fully developed façade with legal lot line windows on the 2<sup>nd</sup> major elevation which looks north over the church.

**WHEREAS** the two finished facades form a uniform bulk for the building; the sculpted top reflects the Gothic design of the church; the west or rear elevation will be clad in a buff-colored brick.

**WHEREAS** the present Annex building covers the full depth of the site; the applicant proposes to create a 33' rear yard which will allow more light into the stained glass windows at the apse of the church.

**WHEREAS** as part of the 1963 enlargement of the Annex, a 12' side yard was created; this side yard will be reduced to 6' and covered with a skylight so that the church windows on the south facing elevation continue to receive some natural light.

**WHEREAS** at the north elevation along 85<sup>th</sup> Street, the applicant proposes to cut through the original historic masonry of the church to create a wheelchair lift entrance with a wood door and sidelight and a new limestone lintel.

**WHEREAS** the Annex, the church and 1000 Park Avenue – all designed in the Gothic revival style – present as a unified street wall on Park Avenue between 84<sup>th</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> Streets.

**WHEREAS** even though the Landmarks Preservation Commission found the Annex to be a non contributing or "no style" building within the historic district, 1000 Park Avenue, the Annex and the church are all designed in the Gothic revival style and this is noted in the designation report for the district.

**WHEREAS** part of the historic fabric of the original rectory (1911) is incorporated into the Annex; the southern bay with its distinctive oriel window; thus, historic fabric provides almost half of the front elevation.

**WHEREAS** the proposed height of the new building [at 204' including mechanicals -- 39' higher than 1000 Park Avenue to the south AND 114' higher than the church to the north (90 feet high {160' to the top of the slender spire})] does not respect the height of the residential buildings along Park Avenue.

**WHEREAS** although the applicant has stated that the punched-in windows are meant to relate to the windows at 1000 Park Avenue, the proposed 6' wide new windows [9'6" for floors 2- 3, 8'6" for floors 4-12, 12'6" for floor 13 and 13'9" for floors 14-15] are much too large; the fenestration of the northern and western facades is especially inappropriate for secondary elevations within the historic district. At the north elevation, the busy arrangement of windows overwhelms the church.

**WHEREAS** the top or crown of the proposed building is too aggressive within the historic district and does not reflect in any way the wedding cake design of traditional Park Avenue apartment buildings; the setbacks present as very narrow with the building appearing as if to rise straight up from the street wall.

**WHEREAS** the spire, the roofline, the south elevation of the church and the stained glass windows on the south elevation are all blocked from view by the applicant's proposal.

**WHEREAS** the side alley between the church and the existing Annex is being reduced from 12' to 6'; the amount of light entering the church through the south facing stained glass windows is compromised by the reduced width of the side alley as well as by the bulk and height of the proposed new building.

**WHEREAS** the applicant's proposal diminishes the church with the views of its spire and south facing elevation severely compromised by the bulk of the new building.

**WHEREAS** the Annex provides breathing room for the church and harmonizes completely with the church; the Annex and the church together form a monumental complex.

**WHEREAS** the proposed new building is too tall, too bulky, has none of the characteristic of a typical Park Avenue apartment building and is too contemporary in design with its vertical limestone panels and projecting pilasters and heavy crown; the design is out of context and inappropriate within the historic district.

**WHEREAS** the applicant has failed to incorporate the historically and architecturally significant Annex into their design.

**WHEREAS** the proposed handicapped door on East 85<sup>th</sup> Street is unnecessary since there is already a handicapped accessible door to the church; the historic fabric of the church should not be compromised by a new door that cuts through the original masonry on the north facing elevation.

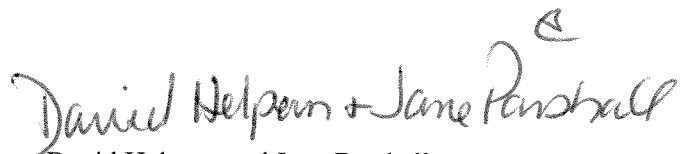
**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that this application is **disapproved** as presented.

*This recommendation was approved by a vote of 31 in favor, 6 opposed, 1 abstention, and 1 not voting for cause.*

Sincerely,

 Nicholas Viest

Nicholas Viest  
Chair

 David Helpern + Jane Parshall

David Helpern and Jane Parshall  
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 26<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Honorable Micah Kellner, NYS Assembly Member, 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District