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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

March 17, 2016

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: 15 East 75th Street (between 5th and Madison Avenues) [Formerly 11, 13, 15 East 75th Street] — Upper East Side Historic District

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

At the Full Board meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, the board adopted the following resolution regarding **15 East 75th Street (between 5th and Madison Avenues) [Formerly 11, 13, 15 East 75th Street] —Upper East Side Historic District** – *Steven Wang, architect [lead presenter], Herzog & de Meuron, architects, Ronda Wist, Wist Preservation Associates*. Application is to combine three buildings into one single family residence.

THIS APPLICATION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: PART 1—THE FRONT ELEVATION AT #11 EAST 75TH STREET AND THE ROOF; PART 2 – THE REAR ELEVATION PLUS TWO BRICK WALLS AT THE PROPERTY LINE. *(The applicant is to be commended on the thoroughness of his presentation and for bringing a detailed model to illustrate especially the changes at the rear of the property.)*

PART A

WHEREAS 15 East 75th Street is a Queen Anne style residence designed by William E. Mowbray and constructed in 1887-89.

WHEREAS 11, 13 and 15 East 75th Street are now legally 15 East 75th Street and are part of a group of what were originally 5 Queen Anne style sister houses all designed by William Mowbray and constructed together.

WHEREAS at the front elevation, the applicant proposes to retain the existing Queen Anne facades on #13 and #15. **THE MAJOR CHANGE AT THE FRONT** is at #11.

WHEREAS the existing neo-Federal-style house at #11, dating from 1940, was built on the skeleton of the pre-existing Queen Anne house and is the only house on the block that presents as neo-Federal.

WHEREAS in November, 2012, The Landmarks Preservation Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for work at the front elevation including non-historic design changes at the lower floors but essentially keeping the existing restrained neo-Federal composition. This work was never completed and the house is now an empty shell.

WHEREAS the applicant proposes to remove what is left of the neo-Federal house and rebuilt exactly the original Queen Anne house on the site using a 1905 historic photo.

WHEREAS the design proposal is to recreate/rebuild a new Queen Anne façade in complement to its original and existing adjacent Queen Anne neighbors at #13 and #15; originally -- the three houses will read at the same level as when they were originally built.

WHEREAS reconstruction work at #11 and restoration work at #13 and #15 will include new slate roofs, new cornice, new wood double hung windows, terra cotta bays at the 2nd floor, and at #11, a new terra cotta stoop with stair and rail and knee wall with an iron railing that will match the historic 1905 image.

WHEREAS the applicant, to restore the quality of the 2 existing Queen Anne houses (#13 and #15) and to insure the quality of the new Queen Anne elevation for #11, is using as a consultant, the Swiss architectural firm of Herzog & de Meuron, responsible for revitalizing the Park Avenue Armory's historic Herter Brothers rooms among other major projects in New York City as well as the conversion of the Bankside Power Station in London to the new home of the Tate Modern.

WHEREAS the applicant proposes to maintain the integrity of the individual facades of the three houses.

WHEREAS at the front, the applicant also proposes to reinstate the front garden

WHEREAS at the roof, there will be a 13' high green trellis covering an unusual interior atrium and two lower elevator and stair bulkheads with a maximum height of 8'.

WHEREAS the reintroduction of the Queen Anne front elevation at #11 and the work at the roof are contextual and appropriate within the historic district.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that PART A of this application -- the front elevation at #11 and the work at the roof -- is approved as presented.

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

PART B – REAR ELEVATION PLUS TWO BRICK WALLS AT THE REAR PROPERTY LINE

WHEREAS the applicant will remove all extensions and additions at the rear – 4,300 sq. ft. altogether-- to recreate a 30' garden that will extend across the 3 lots and present as one unified garden/open space, where before no garden existed.

WHEREAS the applicant will replace the 2 existing non-historic rear elevations [#13 and #15] and the new #11 rear elevation with a new custom bronze window system extending across the entire height and width of the 3 houses with each floor expressed and with each party wall expressed; the system will present as "modern" with a ratio of 60% glazing to 40% bronze. [When one looks at the new rear elevation one will be able to define the 3 individual houses now combined into one house.]

WHEREAS at the rear property line, there are two vertical brick walls that extend up to the height of the house that present as tall structures, almost sculpture-like, one narrow and one wider.

WHEREAS the vertical brick walls will be green and will present as a green screen at the end of the garden at the rear property line.

WHEREAS the rear elevation has too much glazing and does not relate to the Queen Anne style of the front elevations of the 3 houses.

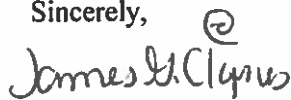
WHEREAS the applicant is using Herzog & de Meuron as consulting architects for the rear elevation as well as the green design of the vertical brick walls.

WHEREAS although there is no relationship between the Queen Anne style of the front elevation and the proposed new rear glass and bronze elevation, the design presents a look of restrained elegance; removal of 4,300 sq. ft. of additions and extensions at the rear to restore open space is to be commended.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Part 2 of this application – the rear elevation and the brick walls at the rear property line – be approved as presented.

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 27 in favor, 13 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

Sincerely,


James G. Clynes
Chairman


David Helpem 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, 26th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District

Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District