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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

September 21, 2015

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

Re: 39 East 67th Street (between Madison and Park Avenues)–Upper East Side Historic District

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

At the Full Board meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2015, the board adopted the following resolution regarding **39 East 67th Street (between Madison and Park Avenues)–Upper East Side Historic District - Matthew Baird, Architect**– Application is for work at the front elevation, work at the rear elevation and the addition of a mechanical bulkhead at the roof.

THIS APPLICATION IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS: PART A: THE FRONT ELEVATION, PART B: THE REAR ELEVATION, and PART C: THE WORK AT THE ROOF.

PART A: THE FRONT ELEVATION

WHEREAS 39 East 67th Street was originally designed by D. & J. Jardine as a brownstone fronted row house and constructed in 1876-1877.

WHEREAS 39 East 67th Street was redesigned in 1903-04 by Ernst Flagg as a 4-story Beaux-Arts style townhouse topped by a copper-trimmed mansard for Arthur Scribner of the publishing dynasty [whose brother Charles was married to Ernest Flagg's sister].

WHEREAS 39 East 67th Street is 25' wide by 67' deep (90' with an extension) and is now broken into apartments; the applicant proposes to return it to single family use. The lot size is 25' wide x100' deep.

WHEREAS at the front, the applicant proposes a complete restoration of the existing 1904 historic elevation, including stone repair, facade cleaning, stone patching, iron repair, window and window frame repair.

WHEREAS at the front, the only proposed change is to the 5th floor out-of-alignment mansard windows which will be restored to their original smaller size so that they will now align with the bays directly below them on the 4th floor.

WHEREAS the proposed changes at the front elevation are contextual and appropriate within the historic district.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that PART A of this application be approved as presented.

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 46 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

PART B: THE REAR ELEVATION

WHEREAS at the rear there is a 4-story extension that measures approximately 9' wide x 20' deep with a glass-enclosed conservatory on top.

WHEREAS the extension was added to the house as part of the 1904 Ernest Flagg redesign.

WHERE the applicant proposes to remove the extension [also known as a "plumbing" extension since it was built to house bathrooms].

WHEREAS the existing 10' rear yard will increase to approximately 30' with the removal of the extension.

WHEREAS at the rear the applicant also proposes to remove the masonry that the extension attaches to in order to create a new flat full-width rear elevation.

WHEREAS the applicant proposes that the new flat, full-width elevation present as floor-to-ceiling glass with intermittent bronze mullions.

WHEREAS the applicant proposes approximately 30 glass panels at the rear; of the glass panels, approximately 14 will be 12' high with a maximum width of 10'. [No masonry is planned for the rear elevation.]

WHEREAS there is no relationship between the 1904 Ernest Flagg Beaux-Arts front elevation and the proposed dramatic level of glazing at the rear with its concurrent lack of any masonry to soften the impact of the proposed glazing.

WHEREAS the applicant's proposed modern treatment for the rear elevation changes the meaning of the historic property and is inappropriate and out of context within the historic district.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the board took no position on PART 2 of this application

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 23 in favor, 20 opposed, 3 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

PART C: THE WORK AT THE ROOF

WHEREAS the applicant proposes a new mechanical penthouse at the roof as well as a new terrace and landscaping.

WHEREAS the new mechanical penthouse will be set back 25' from the front elevation and will be 10' wide x 40' long x 18' high; the applicant plans to "stack" all mechanical equipment in the bulkhead.

WHEREAS the unusual height of the bulkhead results from including a planned emergency generator 9' high x 15' long; the planned terrace reduces the space available for mechanical equipment -- because of the applicant's proposed planned terrace, there is not room to disperse the mechanical equipment.

WHEREAS the proposed 18' high bulkhead will be clad in copper that will oxidize to match the copper mansard.

WHEREAS the proposed bulkhead is visible from the public way -- a maximum of 24" from Park Avenue looking west -- as well as some visibility from the mid-block from Park Avenue between 67th and 68th Streets and from Madison Avenue between 67th and 68th Streets.

WHEREAS the applicant suggested that he is working to compress down the maximum visibility from 24" to 18" which meets the Landmarks Preservation Commission definition of minimally visible.

WHEREAS the proposed mechanical bulkhead is visible from the public way from both Park Avenue and Madison Avenue.

WHEREAS there is room on the roof to disperse the mechanical equipment; the emergency generator alone adds 9' to the height of the mechanical bulkhead.

WHEREAS the unusual height of the mechanical bulkhead which will be visible from the public way is out of context and inappropriate within the historic district.

THEREFORE BE IS RESOLVED that PART C of this application is disapproved as presented.

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 45 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions, 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
