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## The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

December 31, 2012

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

**Re: 909 Madison Avenue (between 72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> Streets) – Upper East Side Historic District**

Dear Chair Tierney:

At the Land Use/Full Board meeting on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, the board adopted the following resolution regarding **909 Madison Avenue (between 72<sup>nd</sup> and 73<sup>rd</sup> Streets) – Upper East Side Historic District - David McAlpine, Architect** – A non-Federal style bank building designed by Schultze & Weaver and built in 1931. Application to alter the rooftop and exterior façade.

**WHEREAS** 909 Madison Avenue is a neo-Federal style bank building designed by Schultze & Weaver and constructed in 1931.

**WHEREAS** the applicant proposes to (1) replace the existing cooling tower/air conditioning unit with a new lower unit on the roof (approx. 4” lower) (2) apply a translucent/frosted film to the existing Federal-style windows with concealed light boxes behind so that the windows will “glow” even though on the interior there will be panels in front of the windows for the display of artwork (i.e., the windows will not provide natural light), (3) on Madison Avenue, the applicant proposes to replace the existing contextual front door with a full height door and to mount two bronze plates with the names of the private art galleries occupying the space on either side of the front door, (4) on 73rd Street, the 5th and most eastern Window of the existing 5 windows will be changed into a door by cutting into the original material of the building -there will also be a new ADA ramp to provide handicapped access into the building.

**WHEREAS** 909 Madison is a particularly lovely example of the neo-Federal style of architecture with its balustrade at the cornice hiding the mansard roof. The masterful symmetry and powerful simplicity of the design are hallmarks of the neo-Federal style.

**WHEREAS** the proposed changes to both the 73rd elevation and the Madison Ave. elevation are disturbing.

**WHEREAS** the new door proposed for 73rd Street with the proposed handicapped accessible ramp will detract from the symmetry of the north-facing elevation as well as cut into the original fabric of the building.

**WHEREAS** the new front door on Madison Avenue presents as a more modern alternative to the existing door and detracts from the neo-Federal style of the architecture.

**WHEREAS** the windows at the ground level on both Madison Avenue and 73rd Street are 15 over 15 divided light windows; the windows at the 2nd floor at either 9 over 9 divided light windows or 6 over 6 divided light windows; there is a grand Palladian window at the 2nd floor of the front elevation on Madison Avenue and the 3 windows that are 9 over 9 divided light windows at the 2nd floor on 73rd Street have Juliet balconies. All of the windows are magnificent with limestone surrounds.

**WHEREAS** the proposed translucent film that will change the look of the windows so that they present as “frosted windows” and that Will be added to most of the windows at both elevations so that the

interior new Walls behind all of the windows can serve as space to hang art seem particularly out of context for a building of this stature and within the historic district.

**WHEREAS** the proposed changes will forever change the presentation of this highly visible and important corner building within the historic district.

**WHEREAS** the applicant has, in addition to the above major changes, proposed exterior restoration work that has been approved at the staff level of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

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

*This recommendation was approved by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention.*

Sincerely,

Nicholas Viest  
Chair

David Helpern and David Liston  
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Liz Krueger, NYS Senate Member  
Hon. Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Micah Kellner, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member  
Hon. Jessica Lappin, NYC Council Member