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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

February 25, 2011

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

Re: Landmark Preservation Commission's Proposed Rule Amendment

Dear Chair Tierney:

The Landmarks Committee of Manhattan Community Board #8 is delighted to have an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendment to the Landmarks Preservation Commission's rule relating to construction work on designated landmarks property.

After careful consideration and much discussion, our comments in the form of an action time or "Resolution" from our committee are as follows: *{please refer to "Notice of Public Document" which contains the annotated "LPC Proposed Rule Amendment"}*

WHEREAS regarding #3. Section 2-16 of Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York, relating to rear yard additions and enlargements, our comments are as follows:

- The Landmarks Preservation Commission should be applauded for linking rooftop and rear yard additions in consideration of individual rowhouse scale and character which questions how much added bulk is appropriate to the historic rowhouse zoning envelope.
- (b) The area for consideration should be from the building's rear façade to the point at which a required rear yard would begin and not the rear lot line. It goes without saying that any proposed work would comply with the Zoning Resolution and not "substantially eliminate the presence of a rear yard".
- (c) Explore the standard for judgment. Are the "comparable" or larger rear yard additions or enlargements" constituting the "majority," original historic additions, grandfathered or even illegal? How would this information be made available to the staff? The history of the rear yard addition and/or roof top addition must be researched carefully.
- (d) Add: "or deeper than the predominant depth of existing additions or enlargements"
- There should be a way to quantify the dimensions of an appropriate rear yard addition. Rooftop additions may prove to be no more than one story with a height of no more than eleven feet and set back at least three feet from the plane of the rear façade and not visible from a public thoroughfare. A formula could be developed which would describe the threshold which -- when exceeded -- would make it impossible to appreciate the "donut" or rear yard from the adjoining property's rear windows. Very similar to a rear sky exposure plane, a rear yard exposure plane would describe some kind of setback requirements ensuring the preservation of the historic rear yard of "donut".

- A 3-foot setback for both roof top additions and roof-top mechanical equipment in both the front (the public way) and the rear is not enough. Rear yard neighbors should be considered the public and their views must be taken into consideration.
- We ask that all applications for roof-top additions and rear yard additions/extensions have a public hearing at the Community Board as the first step in the public approval process.

WHEREAS regarding #6. Section 2-20 of Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York is amended by adding a new paragraph (a), amending subdivision (b) by adding additional definitions, relettering subdivision (c) as subdivision (d), and adding a new subdivision (c) as follows: *[(a) introduction. Signage was a typical feature of historic buildings that contained commercial or manufacturing uses. Such signage included signs painted or affixed above storefronts in signbands, signs within display windows.....],* our comments are as follows:

- For (c) Installation of storefront signs for existing storefronts.
(5) Less ambiguous language – the height and width of front elevation should be considered and a mathematical formula for the size of the sign should be in place of word “proportional”.
- Applicant should be required to bring sample of materials and historic and/or designation photos.
- Canopies are only appropriate for residential building entrances.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the above resolution containing comments on the proposed amendment to the Landmarks Preservation Commission Proposed Rule Amendment be approved as presented.

This resolution was approved by the Landmarks Committee with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Ludorf
Chair

Jane Parshall 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. Jonathan Bing, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Micah Kellner, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member
Hon. Jessica Lappin, NYC Council Member