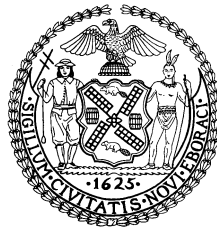


Nicholas Viest
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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

March 20, 2014

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

Re: Picasso Curtain at the Four Seasons Restaurant in the Seagrams Building

Dear Chair Tierney:

At the Full Board meeting on Wednesday, March 19, 2014, the board adopted the following resolution regarding the Picasso Curtain at the Four Seasons Restaurant in the Seagrams Building.

WHEREAS, The Four Seasons Restaurant, located at 99 East 52nd Street, was created by Mies van der Rohe (building) and Philip Johnson (restaurant) in 1959 and designated as an interior landmark in 1989; and

WHEREAS, One critical element of the restaurant is a portion of a painted curtain created by Pablo Picasso for Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes production of "Le Tricorne" in 1919; and

WHEREAS, The curtain is 19 feet high and 20 feet wide and is the largest painting extant by Picasso with the exception of "Guernica," which is located in Madrid; and

WHEREAS, The curtain is, in and of itself, an important work from Picasso's White Period and is unique in terms of its purpose, materials and size and, while valued monetarily for insurance purposes, is critically considered to be priceless; and

WHEREAS, The Picasso Curtain has hung on a travertine wall in the corridor between the Grill Room and the Pool Room of The Four Seasons from the first day of the restaurant's opening in 1959; and

WHEREAS, The curtain is considered an integral part of the design and concept of the restaurant, which was created to be a complete and full artistic experience, including all furnishings, sculpture, art, decoration, tableware, and additional design elements; and

WHEREAS, The importance of the curtain to the concept and execution of the restaurant was such that the section of wall on which it hangs was never clad in travertine by Mr. Johnson; its finish being deemed unnecessary as the curtain was intended to always hang in this location; and

WHEREAS, At the time of the interior landmark designation of The Four Seasons in 1989 it was deemed that the curtain not be included due to both a narrow reading of landmark criteria which saw it as a "removable element" and in recognition of the need to do everything possible to ensure that the restaurant interior gain landmark protection due to the danger of it being dismantled; and

WHEREAS, Legislation following the interior landmark ruling both upheld the designation and made it clear that additional elements, which would clearly have included the Picasso Curtain, would have also been designated if they had been included in the request; and

WHEREAS, The curtain has been regularly recognized as important to the overall design concept of the restaurant and has remained in its original location for 55 years; and

WHEREAS, Its current situation without designation leaves its status as culturally and artistically important and as an essential element of The Four Seasons to the subjective vicissitudes of those in control of the building at any given time; and

WHEREAS, Other elements considered removable, such as lighting fixtures and art, have appeared in many interior landmark designations, such as at The Plaza hotel, further indicating that a designation of curtain is appropriate and within Landmarks Preservation Commission jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Beyond the consideration of the Picasso Curtain as an integral element of the landmarked interior and its artistic and cultural significance, the curtain is in an extremely fragile and dangerous state and may not survive a removal from its location;”

THEREFORE be it resolved that Community Board Eight **submit a Request for Designation** of the Picasso Curtain in its exact location at 99 East 52nd Street as an Interior Landmark and as an addendum to the interior landmark designation of The Four Seasons restaurant with a letter to the Landmarks Preservation Commission similar to the letter sent by Community Board Five, to be signed by The Chair of Community Board Eight and the Co- Chairs of the Community Board Eight Landmarks Committee.

This recommendation was approved by a vote of 39 in favor, 3 opposed, 3 abstentions, and 1 not voting for cause.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Viest
Chair

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, 26th Senatorial District
Honorable Micah Kellner, NYS Assembly Member, 65th Assembly 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