

Alida Camp
Chair

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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 27, 2020

Honorable Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

RE: 1109 Fifth Avenue (between Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue)-Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District - Walter B. Melvin Architects – Chateausque style Individual Landmark originally designed by Charles Pierrepont H. Gilbert between 1906 and 1908 with an additional building built by Roche of Dinkeloo and Associates between 1988 and 1993. Application for a temporary exterior art installation on the Fifth Avenue façade along the second and third floors by artist Lawrence Weiner.

Dear Chair Carroll,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 22, 2020, the board **unanimously APPROVED** the following resolution by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS 1109 Fifth Avenue is the home of the Jewish Museum;

WHEREAS the Jewish Museum seeks to drape the second and third floors of the Fifth Avenue façade with a graphic artwork with an inspirational message designed by Lawrence Weiner;

WHEREAS the artwork is 28'-01/2" high by 100 feet long;

WHEREAS the artwork would remain in place for a period of about four months;

WHEREAS the Jewish Museum obtained an opinion from the Department of Buildings that this work of art is not a sign and does not violate the zoning resolution;

WHEREAS the Jewish Museum showed examples of super-large signs advertising exhibits;

WHEREAS the two largest were draped over large façade areas of the New York Historical Society on the West Side;

WHEREAS these examples were not on Museum mile and are not precedents for Museum Mile;

WHEREAS 1109 was built in two phases: the original house in 1906 -1908, designed by Charles Pierrepont Henry Gilbert, and the enlargement to the north in 1988 – 1993, designed by Kevin Roche of Roche Dinkeloo;

WHEREAS the exterior wall of the original mansion is of solid masonry construction with eight-inch-thick limestone cladding;

WHEREAS the exterior wall of the expansion to the north is a cavity wall with three-inch-thick limestone veneer;

WHEREAS the attachment details for the artwork are similar for the two types of walls;

WHEREAS the artwork will be hung from hot dipped, galvanized brackets attached to the walls with stainless steel anchor bolts;

WHEREAS the anchor bolts for the mansion portion will be eight inches long and the anchor bolts for the enlargement portion will be three inches long;
WHEREAS the anchor bolts will be drilled into the mortar joints for both façade conditions;
WHEREAS there would be 38 anchor bolts in the mansion portion of the façade and 48 in the enlargement portion of the façade;
WHEREAS the anchor bolts will be withdrawn after the artwork is removed, the holes will be filled with restoration mortar, and the mortar textured to match the existing mortar;
WHEREAS the Jewish Museum will replace panels of limestone at the cavity wall if there is damage due to the installation and removal process;
WHEREAS the chateausque style of the mansion requires an invasive method of attaching the brackets to enable the installation of the artwork;
WHEREAS the architecture of the historic district is what is Important, not a temporary work of art;
WHEREAS the need to install 86 bolts to hold the brackets creates a risk for permanent damage to the limestone façade;
WHEREAS the patching method for the mortar is state of the art, there is still a possibility that the patching will not be successful in fully restoring the current visual appearance of the building;
WHEREAS it is possible to replace limestone panels, new panels, if necessary, may not match the existing limestone;
WHEREAS it is important to maintain the visibility of the Fifth Avenue facade and not to cover it even temporarily;
WHEREAS it is important to maintain the integrity of the Fifth Avenue wall and not to take a chance on possible damage from the 86 bolts required for the temporary work of art;
WHEREAS the proposed temporary work of art is not contextual in the historic district;

THEREFORE, this application is **DISAPPROVED**.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Alida Camp
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Chair

David Helpern and Jane Parshall
David Helpern and Jane Parshall
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District