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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

March 17, 2023

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

RE: 972 Fifth Avenue INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK (Upper East Side Historic District) *Stephanie Gerard presenting for Architectural Preservation Studio.* Application is for installation of “The Little Prince” sculpture on the entrance wall to the garden/courtyard along the 5th Avenue sidewalk and for the installation of exterior glass sculptures with lighting behind on the front elevation.

THIS APPLICATION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: Part 1 — the proposed sculpture of "The Little Prince", Part 2 — the installation of exterior glass sculptures with lighting behind on the front elevation.

Dear Chair Carroll,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on March 15, 2023, the board approved **Part A** of the following resolution by a vote of 34 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

Part A -- The proposed sculpture of "The Little Prince"

WHEREAS 972 Fifth Avenue, the Payne Whitney house, is a high Italian Renaissance style building designed by McKim, Mead & White and constructed in 1902-1906;

WHEREAS 972 Fifth Avenue is the home of Cultural Services of the French Embassy, also known as “Villa Albertine”;

WHEREAS the applicant proposes that a sculpture of “The Little Prince” by Jean-Marc de Pas and sponsored by the American Society of le Souvenir Francais be installed on the stone wall near the entrance gate to the courtyard adjacent to 972 Fifth Avenue;

WHEREAS the proposed sculpture is 4 1/2’ high, 1 1/2’ wide and 1 1/2’ deep; 4 stainless steel pins to attach the sculpture would be drilled into the top of the non-historic stone wall;

WHEREAS the applicant also proposes an 8” x 10” bronze plaque to educate the public about the book, The Little Prince, and its author, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, who lived on Central Park South when he wrote The Little Prince;

WHEREAS Antoine de Saint-Exupery left New York before the book was published in 1943 and 15 months later disappeared while on a reconnaissance mission for the US Air Force; while there are memorials honoring him all over the world, there are none in Manhattan;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Part A of this application be approved as presented.

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on March 15, 2023, the board approved **Part B** of the following resolution by a vote of 31 in favor, 6 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

PART B - The proposed exterior lighting

WHEREAS the proposed exterior lighting is designed by BOA Light Studio with offices in New York and Vincennes, France;

WHEREAS Nadir Benkhelifa presented this part of the application for BOA Light Studio;

WHEREAS the applicant proposes to create a light installation for night illumination of the front elevation; a secondary purpose of the installation would be to express or create a relationship to the fine arts-related activities inside French Cultural Services;

WHEREAS the applicant proposes thin glass modernist sculptures that present as vertical rods placed between the columns on the front elevation with lighting behind; the lighting would be programmed to provide movement that presents as abstract for the thin glass sculptures;

WHEREAS the lighting behind the sculptures would create the movement; to express the movement, the lighting will be programmed with very slow moving lights that will not change color;

WHEREAS 4 lights would be placed on each floor of the west elevation and one light would be placed on each floor of the south elevation to emphasize the corner;

WHEREAS the glass rod-like sculptures with lights behind will be fixed onto a hanging system; each fixture will be hung from the upper and lower part of the sculptures;

WHEREAS the fixing system will drill into the joints between the stones; the fixing system will be easy to remove;

WHEREAS the glass sculptures with the lights behind will range in size from 16' at the first floor to 6 1/2' at the 4th floor; there will be 20 glass sculptures/lights altogether; each with a width of 4 3/4" and a thickness of 1 1/4";

WHEREAS the applicant did not present a timeframe for the installation;

WHEREAS the applicant stated that 45 holes would be drilled into the joint mortar as part of the hanging system to support the glass sculptures with the lighting behind;

WHEREAS the applicant's proposal is innovative -- the intervention of the modernist thin glass rods with the lighting behind does not interfere with the magnificent High Renaissance style of the front elevation of the individual landmark;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Part B of this application is approved as presented.

Please advise us of any action taken on these matters.

Sincerely,

Russell Squire

Russell Squire
Chair

David Helpern and Jane Parshall

David Helpern and Jane Parshall
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District