

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

September 23, 2024

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

RE: 53 East 77th Street (Upper East Side Historic District) – *Studio MDA* – A modified neo-Spanish Renaissance building designed by Henry Rutgers Marshall and constructed in 1901, with an alteration to the original Beaux Arts building to the above style in 1926. Application is to restore the primary façade to its 1901 appearance, expand the existing penthouse floor forward, construct a rear yard addition, modify secondary façade window openings, and replace windows.

Dear Chair Carroll,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on September 18, 2024, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 22 in favor, 12 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS 53 East 77th Street was built in 1901 with a Beaux-Arts façade; and

WHEREAS 53 East 77th Street was altered in 1927 with a Spanish Medieval facade; and

WHEREAS the building will be converted to an art gallery; and

WHEREAS the building was held back from the west lot line so that windows could be placed in the west wall; and

WHEREAS the two primary façades are the south façade, or front façade, and the west façade, or side façade; and

WHEREAS the original limestone base from 1901 was replaced with square brick; and

WHEREAS about 50 percent of the original brick remains on the upper portions of the south and west façades; and

WHEREAS brick will be removed from the south and west façades and be replaced with limestone with the historic details; and

WHEREAS the two entrance doors on the front elevation will be relocated to either side to match the original; and

WHEREAS the two entrance doors will be set within limestone arches; and

WHEREAS the restoration will incorporate details from the original design including, for example, the rustication of the arch and the bas relief over each of the entry doors; and

WHEREAS the brick will be patched to match existing on the south and west façades; and

WHEREAS the masonry openings for windows on the south and west façades will be restored with limestone headers including semi-circular headers, keystone headers, and straight headers; and

WHEREAS the bay window on the west elevation will be restored; and

WHEREAS the circular window within the limestone will be restored; and

WHEREAS new double hung wood windows will be installed on the south façade and for the first two rows of the west façade; and

WHEREAS two new double hung wood windows will be installed to align with the two rows of windows above; and

WHEREAS the remaining new windows will be metal, double hung, except for the leaded glass windows on the third floor of the north façade, which will be saved; and

WHEREAS the existing brick walls of the penthouse will be removed on the south, west, and north walls and replaced with brick to match the original; and

WHEREAS the penthouse will be extended with brick to match the original; and

WHEREAS the penthouse will be extended so that it is about two thirds of the overall length of the building and will include a row of six double hung windows on the west façade aligning with the windows below; and

WHEREAS the first and second floor of the north façade will be removed so that the double height space to be created within the existing building can be extended into the rear yard; and

WHEREAS the rear extension will be clad primarily in stucco in a beige color to match the brick on the west façade; and

WHEREAS the metal fire escape and round exhaust pipe will be removed from the north façade; and

WHEREAS the two floors on the north façade will have double hung metal windows in masonry openings; and

WHEREAS the north face of the penthouse will have four new double hung windows set in a horizontal rectangular masonry opening; and

WHEREAS the overhanging roof at the south end of the penthouse terrace will be removed; and

WHEREAS the limestone balustrade and cornices will be restored at the penthouse terrace and the balance of the cornice restored on the west façade; and

WHEREAS the penthouse extension is visible, it is set back, grows out of the floors below, is made of the same materials as the bulk of the building, and presents as part of an overall design; and

WHEREAS the restoration and the modifications are appropriate and contextual within the historic district;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this application is **APPROVED AS PRESENTED**.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Anthony Cohn and David Helpern

Anthony Cohn and David Helpern
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
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

