



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

Delores Rubin
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 29, 2016

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building, 9th floor
One Centre Street New York, NY 10007

Re: 413-435 West 14th Street Rooftop Addition, Canopy and Signage Proposal

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

On the recommendation of its Chelsea Land Use Committee, at its regular Board meeting on July 27, 2016 Manhattan Community Board No. 4 (CB4), by a vote of 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, voted to recommend approval with recommendations for the proposed alterations to 413-435 West 14th Street in the Gansevoort Market Historic District.

Background and Description of Proposal

Originally known as the Gillen Building, for its developer, the twelve-bay concrete building was constructed in 1913-14 and received a fourth-floor addition above its four eastern bays in 1922.

The building, which is currently vacant, will have retail uses on the ground floor with offices on the second and third floors. The applicant proposes to add a 1200 square foot penthouse on the roof of the fourth-floor addition. This penthouse would be used as a conference room, and would be set back 43 feet from West 14th Street. It would have a grey metal facade which would contrast with the existing concrete building.

A canopy would be added over the building entry. Storefront signage would consist of window decals and blade signs.

CB4 Analysis and Recommendations

CB4 finds that the proposed rooftop addition will be minimally visible from the public way and is set back far enough from the existing street façade and clad in such a recessive manner that it will not detract from the building's overall composition.

We also find the proposed signage and glass-and-steel entrance canopy appropriate, and would only ask that the canopy be better rendered in perspective to convey its appearance from the sidewalk so that the Commission might better assess and discuss it. The proposal as presented to

the Board instead relies on a photograph of an existing canopy in the neighborhood to which the proposed one would be similar but not identical.

CB4 has asked the applicant to improve the look of the sidewalk area in front of the building by adding planters or pots with shrubs and/or flowers. A smaller security camera in the front would also make the building more attractive. A bike rack would be a welcome addition.

CB4 regrets the missed opportunity to retain and make use of rainwater from the building's blue roof and the new canopy, both of which will instead drain into the storm sewer. CB4 takes this opportunity to encourage the owner to propose further changes to the building only under a systematic plan to meet standards such as LEED or Passive House, given the building's large scale and impactful footprint. Such an approach might more beneficially inform design directions. For example, restoration of more canopies to the building's south-facing street façade – which historically had a continuous row of them – might have both preservation merit and reduce the building's cooling load through shading, offsetting their construction cost. CB4 hopes in the future to work with the Commission toward solutions which demonstrate awareness of both their immediate historic context and the City's carbon footprint.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
MCB4 Chair



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council