



Greenwich
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Society for
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Preservation

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TESTIMONY OF THE
GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Puck Building
295 Lafayette Street
Certificate of Appropriateness Application
Individual Landmark
September 20, 2011

Good morning Commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Elizabeth Finkelstein and I'm representing the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, which has strong concerns with the proposal to construct a rooftop addition on the Puck Building. GVSHP normally does not comment on applications south of Houston Street on the east side, but we are making an exception in this case due to the significance of the building and the proposed addition's visibility and impact on so much of the surrounding streetscape.

The Puck Building's prominence cannot be underestimated. To quote the designation report, "the enormous red brick structure has been a commanding presence in the neighborhood since the time of its construction... (it) remains one of the most striking 19th-century industrial buildings in lower Manhattan." At the nexus of several different neighborhoods, the building is visible from parts of the East Village, Lower East Side, NoHo, SoHo, and the South Village, and thus any visible changes to the building would have a direct impact on these surrounding areas.

The applicant has gone to great lengths to demonstrate how the current configuration of the Puck Building is the result of multiple phases of construction. But unlike the Museum of Natural History and other buildings in the city that were built in stages, changes to the Puck Building were all supervised by a single architect and, again to quote the designation report, "read as a single unified composition."

The proposed rooftop addition greatly disrupts this unified composition. Not only does it fail to harmonize with the rest of the building, but it is also grossly out-of-scale and highly visible from multiple angles and several surrounding neighborhoods. A proposed addition of this scale and visibility on any landmarked building should raise concerns; given that this is one of the city's most beloved individual landmarks, it is all the more imperative that the proposed addition be significantly scaled back.

We urge the Commission to deny the application as proposed, and to work with the applicant to design an addition that would be significantly less visible from the street.

Thank you.