

Hearing Date: 7/13/2004

LPC Docket Number: 045724

Manhattan, Block 1129, Lot: 12

35 West 76th Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District; Central Park West/West 76th Street Historic District

A neo-Grec style rowhouse designed by George M. Beeckman and built in 1887-89. Application is to alter the façade and construct a rear yard addition.

HDC Testimony

HDC is pleased that the applicant wants to improve the appearance of the base of this handsome rowhouse on this exceptional Upper West Side block. While we think that the proposed portico is intelligently designed and quite handsome, we cannot recommend its approval because it is completely historically inappropriate for this building. When houses such as this lost their stoops over the years, they were generally replaced in the best-case scenario with a handsome door surround reflecting either a period style appropriate to the building or a simple contemporary style. They were never replaced with a columned portico such as the one proposed. Such porticoes would never have been located below grade level and, in fact, are usually somewhat elevated above grade. There is absolutely no precedent in this district or even on the Upper East Side for a portico in a sunken areaway. We recommend that the Commission deny this portion of the application and work with the applicant to develop a proposal that will either recreate the original stoop or create an appropriate new door surround that is in keeping with those traditionally found in this district. Regardless of which option is chosen, the underlying masonry should match the building's historic brownstone in case the existing paint is removed from the stone in the future, which we encourage the applicant to consider as part of the current work campaign.

With regard to the rear yard addition, we believe that its design is too tall and has too much glazed area.

While the removal of the existing el will not affect any significant historic fabric, we feel that the proposed addition will totally obliterate the historic rear façade. It could be found appropriate if its height were lowered by one floor so that the historic top floor's masonry, window openings, and cornice would be visible and the new work would clearly read as an addition. We also feel that the windows in the new portion of the rear façade should be designed in a manner that recalls the traditional punched openings without necessarily replicating the historic pattern.

Hearing Date: 7/13/2004

LPC Docket Number: 045828

Manhattan, Block 1204, Lot: 56

64-70 West 91st Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Four Romanesque Revival style rowhouses built in 1889-90 designed by Henry Harris. Application is to install new windows.

LPC Docket Number: 040082

Manhattan, Block 1207, Lot: 50

48-54 West 94th Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Four Renaissance Revival style flats buildings built in 1895-96 designed by Thom and Wilson. Application is to install new windows.

LPC Docket Number:045830
Manhattan, Block 1203, Lot: 13
38-42 West 90th Street and 47-51 West 89th St - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Three Renaissance Revival style rowhouses built in 1892-93 designed by Hermann Horenburger, and three Renaissance Revival style rowhouses built in 1893 designed by Henry Anderson. Application is to install new windows.

LPC Docket Number: 045829
Manhattan, Block 1204, Lot: 21
22-42 West 91st Street - Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District

Eleven Queen Anne style rowhouses built in 1887-88 designed by William Boylan, a Renaissance Revival style rowhouse built in 1889 designed by Thom and Wilson, and four Renaissance Revival style rowhouses built in 1891 and 1898-99 designed by George Pelham. Application is to install new windows.

HDC Testimony

While HDC would rather see wood windows installed on rows such as these in this historic district, we recognize that many of the proposed windows meet the rules for staff-level approval and we will limit our comments to the appropriateness of the proposed metal windows. In general, we believe the proposal fails to address the differences in style and detailing that the windows on these rows undoubtedly originally possessed. We think this could be mitigated if the applicant used different profiles for the new brickmolds to reflect the variation of styles and the different architects of the various rows included in these applications. Ideally, these profiles would be based on any extant evidence found at the existing window frames, which appear to have been panned over in the previous window replacement campaign. We also would like to see some variation in the finish colors selected, particularly on the blocks that have rows of different styles designed by different architects in different years. We think that the homogeneity that will result from the single color proposed will be at odds with the character of the district and the distinctive styles of the rows in question.

We are pleased to see that the multi-pane arch-headed window and transom at 26 West 91st and the multi-pane transoms at 36 West 91st will be retained. We do, however, also have some specific recommendations for several other individual buildings covered by this proposal:

24 West 91st: this is the only building in this proposal that received a new façade sometime in the early-20th century, and we think it is important that this significant change be reflected in the new windows. Specifically, we ask that you require the city to install windows that emulate the multi-pane configuration of the windows seen in the tax photo.

Stoop Removal: many of these building had their stoops removed at some point. Typically, the front door opening was infilled with masonry and windows. In many cases, the existing windows fill the width of the former doorway, with a pair of double-hung window being surmounted by a transom. This provides a visual clue about the buildings' alteration history. In other cases, the doorway was infilled primarily with masonry that contains smaller double-hung windows that do not give a sense of the historically larger opening. The current proposal calls for the installation of new windows within the existing openings.

HDC believes that this misses an opportunity to enlarge the window openings that are too small and install the paired double-hung with transom configuration that better tells the story of these buildings and how they changed over the years. The buildings that we believe should have enlarged window openings at the former doorways are: 15, 17, 19, 21, 38, 40, and 42 West 90th Street; and 22, 26, 32, 34, 40, and 42 West 91st Street.

Arched Openings: several buildings originally had arched window openings at the parlor level that were

subsequently infilled to accommodate smaller, flat-headed windows. The raised voussoirs around the original openings are still visible on these facades. We think that the infill should be removed and that new round-headed windows should be installed within the original openings. Buildings where this occurs are: 26, 28, 30, 36, and 38 West 91st Street.

Window size reduction: we are a little mystified about the windows proposed for 23 West 90th Street. The existing replacement windows at the parlor level fill the tall historic opening. The new proposal calls for the reduction of the height of these openings and the installation of smaller windows. We strongly urge the Commission to demand that the new windows at this building fit within the historic openings.

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