

**Combined Victorian Society Testimony for March 5, 2024: 346 Broadway, aka 108 Leonard Street, 46 Lafayette Street (LPC-23-08657); 83 and 85 Chambers Street, aka 65 and 67 Reade Street (LPC-22-09644 and LPC-22-09645); 272-276 Macon Street, aka 161-165 MacDonough Street (LPC-24-05395); 311 7th Avenue (LPC-24-00186).**

*Note: LPC-24-05350 -- 924 Broadway - Ladies' Mile Historic District, Manhattan, legalization of windows, held over from Feb. 17, 2024 hearing, was approved 8-0, with a note that the window pattern is not to be used as a guide for any future replacement.*

**Approximate time: 9:45; join Zoom by: 9:30.**

**LPC-23-08657 -- 346 Broadway (aka 108 Leonard Street, 46 Lafayette Street) - Former New York Life Insurance Building - Individual and Interior Landmark, Manhattan**

Good morning commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York.

It appears to us that the applicant has chosen the wrong space for their gallery. Many permanent changes are proposed that will obscure, damage, or deface protected architectural features of this magnificent interior. These changes include permanent walls in front of historic architectural features, boxy enclosures intruding into the space, structural anchors to allow a steel grid to hang from the ornate ceiling, decorative plasterwork moved to accommodate motorized window blinds, a great many permanent lighting fixtures and so on. Other galleries the applicant shows as precedents appear to be more sensitively designed. The features added to these other spaces are all clearly temporary and kept away from original wall and ceiling surfaces.

The designers of this gallery space and the Commission need to begin with the premise that this is a rare interior landmark. Protection of its physical fabric and visual character should be primary. This proposal falls far short of that.

***No action. General agreement on the proposal, but some revisions requested to heights of walls, enclosure at vault, color scheme etc.***

***3/19/24: Approved 7-1 (Goldblum), with condition that applicant work with staff on plan for removal and storage of historic materials, design of cresting on top of vault and other details to minimize damage to historic features and appearance, and that applicant agrees that if the adaptive reuse ends, the alterations will be removed and the spaces restored to their previous condition.***

***Approximate time: 12:15; join Zoom by: 11:15.***

**LPC-22-09644 and LPC-22-09645 -- 83 and 85 Chambers Street, aka 65 and 67 Reade Street - Tribeca South Historic District, Manhattan**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York.

The proposed rooftop additions, changes to the lot line façade, and new window openings in the lot line walls are modest, well-designed, and appropriate.

We think the decorative fire escapes on the Reade Street façade should be retained. Reade Street is narrower than Chambers Street, giving the fire escapes a more impressive presence there. Also, there are more remaining fire escapes on Reade Street. We note that cantilevered ladders were present at the Reade Street fire escapes at the time of designation, but have been removed and replaced with simple drop ladders.

The paired, double-hung windows proposed for the wide middle bay of no. 85 Chambers Street are not appropriate. The 1920s alteration had large, single panes of glass at the three upper floors. A narrow transom was incorporated at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor window. These large, single windows are important to the character of this façade. Some divisions are possible, but the effect should be of large, single windows. Paired double-hungs work against this effect.

Finally, as always, we object to the single sidelights on some of the ground floor doors. These have no historic precedent and appear like very contemporary insertions. Where double door leaves are too narrow, or side clearance is needed for access reasons, a better solution is to install automatic door actuators.

***Approved with modifications 8-0, with applicant to consider casements at 85 Chambers St. windows and retention of decorative portions of fire escapes (baskets).***

*Lunch*

***Approximate time: 2:30; join Zoom by: 1:30.***

**LPC-24-05395 -- 272-276 Macon Street, aka 161-165 MacDonough Street - Stuyvesant Heights Historic District, Brooklyn**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York.

The existing carved stone signs over the entrances were carefully designed as part of the entrance architecture. If they are covered with new signs, the new signs should be exactly the size and shape of the old. They should cover no more of the historic masonry. This will help retain the architectural integrity of the entrances. Another appropriate approach, and perhaps a better one, is to leave the existing signs alone and install modestly scaled sign boxes either inside the fence or affixed to the fences.

***Approved with modifications 8-0: metal doors to be wood-clad and details to be developed with staff to better reflect style of the building; signs on building to match shape and color of existing signs, and additional signs with logo off building can be approved by staff.***

***Approximate time: 3:00; join Zoom by: 2:00.***

**LPC-24-00186 -- 311 7th Avenue - Park Slope Historic District Extension, Brooklyn**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York.

The previous storefront had a fabric awning, transoms over the wood storefront doors, and discreet signs. These features had some sympathetic architectural relationship to the building and historic district. The illegal work replaced these with an enormous projecting metal box and screaming, oversized sign.

It is our hope that when retail streets are included in historic districts, regulation would result in improvements over time. Such improvements would result in storefronts that are harmonious in scale, materials, and architectural details with the historic buildings to which they are affixed. This work took us in the opposite direction. It should not be legalized.

***Approved with modifications 8-0, with residential entrance to be revised with a door and transom better relating to the building's historic character.***