

**Victorian Society Testimony for September 24, 2024: 12 East 69th Street (LPC-25-00039); 53 East 77th Street (LPC-25-01907); 726 Madison Avenue (LPC-25-01748); 990 Park Avenue, aka 52-72 East 84th Street - The Church of St. Ignatius Loyola; (LPC-24-10093); 1160 Amsterdam Avenue - Saint Paul's Chapel (LPC-25-00279)**

**510 Fifth Avenue: No action, consider revising size and location of corner signs, mirroring at columns, increased transparency through displays**

***Approximate time: 11:30; join Zoom by: 10:30***

**LPC-25-00039 -- 12 East 69th Street - Upper East Side Historic District, Manhattan**

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

The Victorian Society is happy to support the applicant's proposals for 12 East 69<sup>th</sup> Street.

Lowering the front areaway and modifying the existing basement entrance will require removal of only a very small amount of historic masonry. This change, minimally visible from the sidewalk because of the depth of the areaway and the restoration of the relatively solid historic fence, will have no effect upon the overall character of this mansion.

The existing alley between buildings facing East 68<sup>th</sup> does allow a limited view of the rear façade of 12 East 69<sup>th</sup>. Because of this, the rooftop shade structures will be partially visible. But we can support this change, given that the structures will be set back from the rear façade and have been designed to look like semi-permanent pavilions. Pavilions such as this, as well as pergolas and awnings, are frequently seen on penthouses on the Upper East Side and are, we believe, in keeping with the character of the district. The other changes to the rear façade, rear yard and garden wall will not be visible. The changes to the roof bulkhead are unobtrusive

Finally, we were very pleased to see that the applicants are proposing to recreate the original main entrance. The 1945 photo shows metal and glass doors here, and this type of door is often seen at mansions in this district. However, we feel that the entrance visible in the 1915 photo is much more appropriate for this remarkably discreet mansion.

Thank you, commissioners.

***Approved 8-0.***

*lunch*

***Approximate time: 1:00; join Zoom by: 12:00***

**LPC-25-01907 -- 53 East 77th Street - Upper East Side Historic District, Manhattan**

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

The 1926 makeover of this house in the Spanish Renaissance style was comprehensive and is a significant, 100-year-old alteration. Under other circumstances, we would find that the current design should be retained. However, in this case we find that the workmanship of the renovation was poor. The house is covered with a series of scars that speak more of an architectural trauma than a fashionable makeover. Therefore, we somewhat reluctantly support this well- detailed proposal to restore the house to its original 1900 appearance.

***Approved 8-0.***

**Approximate time: 2:15; join Zoom by 1:15**

**LPC-25-01748 -- 726 Madison Avenue - Upper East Side Historic District, Manhattan**

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

We wondered why a bank branch would be built in this style rather than in the more solidly monumental, neo-Classical style typical of banks. Daytonian in Manhattan explains why this bank branch is pretending to be an elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century town house.

The design was precisely to the taste of Bank of the Manhattan Company Vice-President Raymond E. Jones, who also served as treasurer and director of the Museum of the City of New York. The Georgian Revival museum was completed just before this bank branch. The bank had been founded in 1799 and Jones set out to replicate the best of that period's design. The first floor interiors were a step back into an elegant Georgian mansion. Fluted columns, scenic wallpaper and a sweeping curved staircase caught the period perfectly. The illusion was carried through to the teller desks, where the expected cages were replaced with open, face-to-face counters.

At the exterior, the architect's attention to period detail extended even to the working wrought iron shutter dogs on the upper windows. Rippled glass panes were used to simulate age. Splayed lintels, slate roof tiles, a Chinese Chippendale roof railing, Flemish bond brickwork and a delightful second floor balcony on 64<sup>th</sup> Street added to the illusion.

We hope the new occupants will treat these special interiors kindly, but the Commission can and should require that the nearly intact exterior be treated with respect. That means the original paneled shutters with their highly visible wrought-iron hardware including shutter dogs, hinges, and long bolts should remain and be restored and continue to be painted white. The original, special, multilight windows with their wavy glass, a deliberate decision when used in 1933, should be restored. Interior storm windows are a possibility. If the windows must be remade, a custom design incorporating restoration glass with true divided lights on the outside and secondary glazing inside is an option.

The proposed front door, replacing a modern one, is stylistically appropriate. The new side door will affect this façade's symmetry. However, because this is a side façade, and the symmetry is already compromised by the rear wing, we feel it's an appropriate change. It maintains all the masonry trim and requires the loss of only a small amount of brick.

The rooftop additions are far too large and visible; they must be considerably reduced. Perhaps some of the bulk can be pushed to the far interior corner, thus appearing less connected to this building.

***No action; reduce rooftop equipment, consider retaining white shutters.***

***Approximate time: 3:45; join Zoom by: 2:45***

**LPC-24-10093 -- 990 Park Avenue, aka 52-72 East 84th Street - The Church of St. Ignatius Loyola - Individual Landmark - Park Avenue Historic District, Manhattan**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. We must admit to being confused by the proposed alterations to the inner doors at the three Park Avenue entrances. Each of these entrances has two sets of doors. The outer set are massive bronze doors which either slide into pockets, at the central opening, or are hinged to lie flat against the side of the door surround when open. The inner doors are hinged, bronze finished metal, and plain glass. Above the inner doors there are upper and lower glass transoms with rectangular panes or stained glass. The doors are probably replacements, simply detailed in a way which is totally unobtrusive when seen in conjunction with the lavish detailing of the rest of the church. The transoms appear to be historic.

The proposed inner doors are also metal and glass, with narrow frames allowing for larger areas of glass. It is the design and type of glass which we question. The glass is to be attack resistant rated glass, with a ceramic frit design which will obscure views into the church. We find this choice unacceptable. The ceramic frit design will be seen at eye level, exactly where it will draw the eye away from the historic features of the entrances. The grid design is used in metalwork at the church but isn't used in the historic transom glass directly above the new doors. Finally, we've often testified against proposals where applicants create the appearance of "Fortress New York" at entrances to buildings. We find it especially disturbing to see a church on Park Avenue restrict the view into the building at all the major entrances. The existing bronze doors appear to offer a high level of security.

We strongly urge the use of glass without this distracting frit pattern.

We support the proposed changes to the landing and handrail at the central entrance facing Park Avenue, and to the changes to the East 84<sup>th</sup> Street entrance, finding that the work will not destroy any significant amount of historic material and will be unobtrusive seen in conjunction with the remarkable details which are a hallmark of this structure.

Thank you, commissioners.

***Approved 8-0.***

***Approximate time: 4:15; join Zoom by: 3:15***

**LPC-25-00279 -- 1160 Amsterdam Avenue - Saint Paul's Chapel - Individual Landmark, Manhattan**

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

The Victorian Society supports the proposed changes to increase accessibility to Saint Paul's Chapel. We'll note that sloping the historic brick terrace in front of the chapel will diminish the importance of the building's stone base, but we believe this is an acceptable compromise. The restoration of the portico pavement and the related waterproofing are, we assume, to be approved at staff level, but the photos show the work is overdue and will be very welcome.

We commend the applicant's very careful presentation of alternate schemes but feel that the best one has been overlooked. The west façade of Saint Paul's Chapel is completely symmetrical. Scheme 7.2, on the last page of the presentation, would keep this symmetry with the use of a pair of ramps and a pair of handrails. We urge approval of Scheme 7.2. Thank you, commissioners.

***Approved 8-0.***