

Victorian Society Testimony for April 29, 2025: 300 Lafayette Street (LPC-25-07216); 52 East 64th Street (LPC-25-07196)

Approximate time: 9:30; join Zoom by: 9:30

LPC-25-07216 -- 300 Lafayette Street - SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District Extension, Manhattan

Good morning commissioners, _____ for the Victorian Society New York. We find it difficult to imagine how this glass building could possibly be made any less compatible with a historic district designated for its cast-iron and masonry buildings. The applicant has managed to show us how to do this by proposing a multitude of eye-catching signs. They all say the same thing. They will serve to call additional attention to this building. This proposal is overblown and inappropriate.

The Commission has the mandate to reduce signage which is overwhelming to a building or streetscape. There should be no more than two exterior signs approved for a single retail establishment in this building.

Adding insult to injury is the enormous LED sign proposed just inside the entrance. The scale and type of this sign would be suitable for a district like Times Square. It is not appropriate to the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District. It should be significantly reduced in size if not eliminated altogether.

Approved 8-0.

Approximate time: 11:00; join Zoom by: 10:00

LPC-25-07196 -- 52 East 64th Street - Upper East Side Historic District, Manhattan

Good morning commissioners, _____ for the Victorian Society New York. The Victorian Society has long advocated for the preservation of comprehensive, early 20th century rowhouse alterations of the kind seen in this house. They are evidence of an important trend in housing in New York City. They're also important as early examples of the preservation and reuse potential of old and deteriorated buildings. Frederick Sterner was the first and perhaps the most important practitioner of this type of alteration in New York.

Many of these significant early 20th century alterations have been undone in recent years. The results are frequently incomplete or speculative restorations. The resulting facades lack the integrity of either their original designs or their early 20th century redesigns. The Commission, unfortunately, has approved many such alterations. Recently, though, it appears to have been more attuned to the significance of these altered buildings.

The current proposal, we believe, successfully retains the essential form and details of Sterner's façade while eliminating a really unpleasant below-grade entrance. We urge approval. One possible improvement would be to reduce the presence of the two lanterns on either side of the entrance. We think a more discrete lighting solution would work better.

Approved 8-0.