

**Victorian Society Testimony for July 8, 2025: 4695 Independence Avenue - Greystone Gatehouse (LPC-25-0904); 1 Main Street (LPC-25-07440); Eastern Parkway at Utica and Buffalo Avenues (LPC-25-11028); 491 East 17th Street (LPC-25-04592); 344 Bowery (LPC-25-09497); 465 6th Avenue (LPC-25-04392); 94 Bank Street (LPC-25-00834)**

***Approximate time 9:30; join Zoom by: 930***

**LPC-25-09048 -- 4695 Independence Avenue - Greystone Gatehouse - Individual Landmark, the Bronx**

Good morning commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. Founded in New York City in 1966, the Victorian Society in America is dedicated to fostering the appreciation and preservation of our 19th and early 20th century heritage. The NY chapter promotes preservation of our historic districts, individual and scenic landmarks, interiors and civic art.

The Victorian Society supports this relatively modest addition to the Greystone Gatehouse. Its scale, proportions, and details are all in harmony with the original building and do not overwhelm it. However, on an individual landmark, an addition designed in the style of the original needs to match the original historic materials. The roof must be real slate and the siding must be wood clapboard. Substitute materials are not appropriate in this case.

***Approved 9-0.***

***Approximate time: 10:20; join Zoom by: 9:30***

**LPC-25-07440 -- 1 Main Street - DUMBO Historic District, Brooklyn**

Good morning commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. This building, as with so many early 20<sup>th</sup> century factory buildings, is largely about its windows. They take up most of the façade area. It's therefore very important for the window configurations to be historically correct. In this case, we know from both photographs and remaining original windows that the configuration should be three-over-three.

In other recent applications, we've seen the importance of returning to original window configurations. The reinstatement of multilight casement windows at Williamsburg Houses and Harlem River Houses are two excellent examples of this. The difference these historically accurate windows make is breathtaking. Actually removing historic, multi-light windows in favor of the most bland one-over-one windows would be a move in the wrong direction.

Because the original sash were pivoting, the proposed change to a fixed sash over a tilt-and-turn sash is, we feel, appropriate in this case.

***Approved 9-0.***

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

**LPC-25-11028 -- Eastern Parkway at Utica and Buffalo Avenues, Eastern Parkway Scenic Landmark, Brooklyn**

Good morning commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. The Eastern Parkway Scenic Landmark is over two miles long, and this proposal affects a very small part of it. But no work on the parkway should be undertaken without careful consideration of its effects on the overall design as well as on the immediate vicinity.

Granite block pavers come in an infinite variety of finishes. The “smooth” blocks proposed may be too smooth and potentially slippery when wet. Stone with thermal and other finishes has a more appropriate character, and with proper jointing is accessible.

We also believe that 80 foot long segments without trees are inappropriate and unnecessary for accessibility. There are already long stretches of the parkway without trees because of subway infrastructure. We shouldn’t make this situation worse. There is room for both trees and access to bus doors. People with all levels of mobility would appreciate shade when waiting at a bus stop.

Finally, we note that the application includes signs, but there is no information on signs in the presentation. We therefore can’t comment on this. The Commission should be aware, however, that when the parkway was reconstructed 30 years ago, the Commission approved a coordinated and comprehensive plan for pavements and street furnishings, including lampposts, bollards, traffic signals, benches, trees, and signs. Any additions to or relocation of these elements should follow this plan and not substitute standard materials and designs.

***Approved 9-0.***

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

**LPC-25-04592 -- 491 East 17th Street - Ditmas Park Historic District, Brooklyn**

Good morning commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. This may seem like a small change, but these grass ribbons in driveways are an important expression of the desire by the original developers to make these neighborhoods as green and suburban as possible. We fail to see why the fact that some have disappeared means it's appropriate to remove more of them. Just the opposite. The grass ribbon should stay.

***Approved 9-0; applicant may consider permeable pavers in the center strip.***

*lunch*

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

**LPC-25-09497 -- 344 Bowery - NoHo Historic District Extension, Manhattan**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. Does anyone think this mural calls undue attention to itself? We do. Recognition of an artist does not need to come in the form of a giant artwork by someone else.

Basquiat's presence in this neighborhood is already documented by the plaque on the actual building where he worked. The applicant states that fans are well aware of his connection to the building on Great Jones, but he had no known connection to 344 Bowery. Basquiat is well represented in city museums. The proposed sign does not follow any of the LPC guidelines for painted wall signs in historic districts. It is overwhelmingly large. It seems designed more to be a celebration and display of this artist's style and ability than the legacy of Basquiat.

Aside from the inappropriateness of this work to the historic district, we note that as a work of art rather than an advertising sign, once installed it may be protected by law with the possibility that it can never be removed. This should be investigated, and the potential effect on future alterations to the adjacent vacant lot should also be determined.

***Approved 9-0.***

***Approximate time: 1:30; join Zoom by: 12:30***

**LPC-25-04392 -- 465 6th Avenue, aka 101 West 11th Street - Greenwich Village Historic District, Manhattan**

Good afternoon commissioners, \_\_\_\_\_ for the Victorian Society New York. At the minimum, this application represents a lost opportunity. The storefront, with the changes proposed, could be found anywhere in the city. A properly vetted redesign including historic proportions and materials would allow this storefront to finally be brought to a level that is architecturally compatible with the building and the historic district. The current proposal should be denied.

The new storefront infill is inappropriate design, and applying plastic laminate to the glass to create a faux bulkhead doesn't fix it. We note that there are existing large, lighted signs behind the glass. Adding the large signs to the sign band—apparently the same illegal signs that were removed--would result in excessive signage. The lighting strip above the sign, where a true storefront cornice should be, is also inappropriate. It would likely be extremely bright.

***Approved 9-0.***

***Approximate time: 1:50; join Zoom by: 12:50***

**LPC-25-00834 -- 94 Bank Street - Greenwich Village Historic District, Manhattan**

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

The configuration of the tiny rear yards on this end of the block means that excavation will be done adjacent to several buildings under very close quarters. We think this presents a serious risk to these very old buildings, despite the assurances we're likely to hear about enhanced engineering reviews.

The large, two-story rear addition plus the rooftop addition that extends to the rear wall together obliterate almost all sense of the original house, or that this is a historic house at all. This is inappropriate. More of the original rear wall needs to be exposed, and the rooftop addition needs to be pushed back from the rear wall. It also needs to be made less visible from the street at the front of the building.

***No action.***