



September 25th, 2023

Hon. Sarah Carroll
Commissioner
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

RE: Letter of Support from Manhattan Community Board 9 with the requirement that the proposed storefront roll-down security gates be open mesh.

1030 Amsterdam Ave. at W 111th Street
Community District: MN-9

Borough/Block/Lot: MANHATTAN/1882/ 36
Landmark: Morningside Heights Historic District

DOCKET #LPC-23-10724

Work Type: General Requirements, Storefronts
Awnings, Canopies

Dear Commissioner Carroll,

During our Manhattan Community Board 9 September 6, 2023 Landmarks Preservation and Parks Committee meeting, **The Hungarian Pastry Shop** proprietor Philip Binioris and Diamantopoulou Kolb Architecture D.P.C. presented a design proposal to renovate its storefront.

This Renaissance Revival style mixed-use building located at 1030 Amsterdam Avenue was designed in 1908 by architects Neville & Bagge. Many features of this storefront include; awnings; roll-down security gates; windows replaced; brick patched in light court; metal chimney with vent in light court; and leader according to the 2017 Morningside Heights Historic District Designation Report. It faces the West 111th Street People's Garden adjacent to St. John the Divine Cathedral to the north. This establishment has been a cultural and community gathering place of the neighborhood for decades and is known for its pastry, free refillable coffee, artwork, book displays, writer's paradise atmosphere, lacking Wi-Fi and being featured in film, TV shows and referenced in books.

From its most recent renovation in 1978 to the present, the storefront has been adorned with artwork by Yanni Posnakoff, who co-owned the pastry shop from 1976 until 1992. Its current restoration requires energy efficiency measures, increased circulation, improved accessibility, and façade repairs. The applicant proposes new insulated glass units at the kitchen door and storefront. Neither entrance door meets ADA clearance and approach requirements. Therefore, new doors will be made flush to the sidewalk, not set on an angle and will improve ADA accessibility. Unfortunately, the original storefront artwork cannot be preserved. Therefore, a change in the distribution and material composition of the existing artwork by Digital transformation of the images into vitreous mosaic glass tile attached to new insulated walls is proposed.



Increased fresh air circulation through operable windows and light is desired. It is preferred window mullions are not added and that the storefront glass is continuous. However, the mullions are necessary for the easy operability of the proposed windows and to create a sense of balance. New clear storefront display window glass, two roll-up/security gates, hidden LED lights, and aluminum storefront doors including an opaque kitchen glass door are also proposed. It is preferred that the kitchen glass door is also clear, but we understand the need for privacy in this work area. The red and white awning which displays the name of the business will remain and continue to be visible, while the gate is closed, and fully retracted. We support the storefront improvements described herein with the following notable exception as follows.

The applicant is proposing closed galvanized slats and non-recessed storefront security gates rather than open mesh and recessed security gates. Although existing site conditions such as displays and a banquette present a challenge for a recessed security gate at the entrance, we do not support installation of a closed mesh or solid galvanized slat storefront roll-down security gates.

It is important that this small business which is known for its pastry, book and art displays be open for the community to window shop through open mesh views even when the business is closed. Providing the appearance that our community is open for business and to showcase the unique architectural features of our historic structures is important as we strive to improve our streetscapes and increase economic development especially in commercial overlay residential areas where there may be significant pedestrian traffic even after regular business hours. Finally, we request notification of any changes to the permit type and further modifications to submitted work as the applicant continues to work with LPC staff.

If you have any questions and/or further information is needed, please do not hesitate contacting me or District Manager, Eutha Prince, at the board office (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,

Victor Edwards
Chair

Cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor
Hon. Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Cordell Cleare, NYS Senator, 30th Senatorial District
Honorable Daniel J. O'Donnell, NYS Assemblyman, 69th Assembly District
Honorable Inez Dickens, NYS Assembly Member, 70th Assembly District
Honorable Al Taylor, NYS Assemblyman, 71st Assembly District
Honorable Shaun Abreu, Member of the NYC Council, 7th Council District
Honorable Kristin Richardson Jordan, Member NYC Council, 9th Council District
Mr. Zead Ramadan, Executive Director, West Harlem Development Corporation