



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

March 7, 2014

Hon. Robert B Tierney  
Chair  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Municipal Building, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
One Centre Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Terminal Stores  
220 Twelfth Avenue  
West Chelsea Historic District**

Dear Chair Tierney:

At a regular Board meeting on March 5, 2014 Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4), voted to recommend, with comments, approval of an application for an exterior renovation master plan for the Terminal Stores building in the West Chelsea Historic District. This vote reflects the recommendation of the CB4 Chelsea Land Use Committee which voted on this application on February 25, 2014.

The building occupies a full block between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues from West 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> Streets, and was designated as a landmark in 2008. It has an extraordinary vaulted passageway originally constructed to accommodate the tracks of the New York Central Railroad, entering the two ends of the building through enormous arches. The building was constructed as 26 separate parcels during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over time it has suffered a major fire and a resultant partial rebuilding, and has contained many uses, including one of the first refrigerated warehouses.

A previous master plan proposal approved by the Commission 2012 is a guideline for replacing the existing windows. The applicant is now proposing a master plan to accommodate the reuse of the building from a storage warehouse to a pedestrian-friendly retail and office facility. Two Certificates of Appropriateness for the building are proposed:

1. For the following building elements:
  - First floor storefronts
  - Storefront platforms
  - Canopies
  - Exterior lighting.

2. For the approval of a single ground floor tenant's exterior signage at Eleventh Avenue and West 28<sup>th</sup> Street

A comprehensive signage master plan proposal is being prepared by the applicant and will be submitted for separate review at a later date.

The Board commends the applicant for a well-reasoned, sensitive and clear presentation of a complex proposal to the Chelsea Land Use Committee. The Board finds the proposal generally appropriate, including its introduction of an applied steel channel around the building at canopy level, recalling its historic continuous canopy and grounding the building to the site in a similar manner. The removal of non-original white paint from extensive areas of exterior brick façade is appreciated by the Board, as is the proposed use of glass for the canopies' roof surface.

The Committee finds the proposed multiple gooseneck lighting fixtures illuminating the new single tenant signs to be out of character with the building and neighborhood, and suggests that alternate lighting be studied and proposed for these signs. The Committee does not object to the painted-on-brick nature of this signage in this one instance, but would like to go on record as noting that it should not necessarily be viewed as an agreeable building-wide precedent during consideration of the forthcoming signage master plan.

CB4 encourages the reconstruction of the two original tall cornices, recreating the tower effect at the building's corners. The historic photograph in the applicant's presentation material shows a freight engine emerging from the building's large arched opening on Eleventh Avenue. This photo shows that the "bookend" corner elements originally had taller brick cornices which gave them the appearance of corner towers. These tall cornices anchored the building's corners and gave it a distinct visual dynamic. They provided counterpoints to the central arched avenue opening, while giving it the appearance of a castle drawbridge portal. This fanciful castle expression gave the structure a distinctive identity and advertised safekeeping in the manner of an armory.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



J. Lee Compton  
Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh  
Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee