



18 November 2014

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Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10036

re: 108 Leonard Street

Dear Chair Srinivasan,

On behalf of the AIA New York Chapter and our 5,000 architect and associate members here in New York City, we would like to register our strong support for the Beyer Blinder Belle proposal for 346 Broadway, aka 108 Leonard Street.

The Policy Board of AIANY had the benefit of viewing a presentation with the design and development team last week, and several important factors came forth that, we think, have overarching, citywide importance.

First, the building conversion, of a woefully neglected municipal office building, continues a trend of Lower Manhattan residential conversation that takes advantage of consumer demand and irreplaceable historic fabric, not to mention superb natural light.

Second, the design team has ingeniously devised ways to make the historic interiors of the building more publicly accessible. These include but are not limited to the fourth floor "President's Office" and a major interior stair. Formerly private spaces will now be part of easily visible commercial space, part of a welcome mixed-use building program.

Third, the exterior changes to the landmarked building fabric are calm, respectful, and light-handed. Where there were three vehicular entrance bays to the underground parking garage, now there will be two. Needed mechanical equipment on the roof is essentially out of sight lines. Material insertion does not call undue attention to restoration work. New metal balconies, for example, will fill in the scars of the fire escapes made unnecessary by the insertion of new code-compliant stair cores.

Most importantly, the restored building, partly by McKim, Mead & White, will become a good neighbor to other significant Broadway renovations, including the New York Sun Building, and help serve as a connector between the Civic Center and the thriving blocks of Tribeca.

We assume that details such as the balustrade and exact positioning of relocated interior spaces will continue to develop as the project progresses, but we nonetheless give the intent and presentation of issues our support and applause.

Yours truly,

Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, 2014 President

Rick Bell, FAIA, Executive Director