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Chair

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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

July 18, 2025

Honorable Sarah Carroll, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

RE: 118 East 95th Street (Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District) – *Christopher (Kit) Middleton* – A Queen Anne style building designed by C. Abbott French & Co. and constructed in 1887-88. Application is for the creation of a new cellar level for a new laundry room, storage room, and mechanical room, as well as for excavation and a new foundation.

Dear Chair Carroll,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on July 16, 2025, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 35 in favor, 5 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS the applicant seeks to excavate to create a cellar level with new laundry room, storage room, and mechanical room; and

WHEREAS this project will not include any changes to the exterior of the building; and

WHEREAS all the houses in this neighborhood are built on solid New York Schist; and

WHEREAS none of the houses have cellars suitable for occupancy because of the challenges of removing Manhattan Schist; and

WHEREAS a few of the houses have cellar spaces just large enough for mechanical equipment; and

WHEREAS John V. Dinan Associates, Inc. prepared an interior and exterior report for the existing conditions of 118 East 95th Street; and

WHEREAS John V. Dinan Associates prepared 21 reports for the exteriors of neighboring buildings; and

WHEREAS it became evident that interiors of neighboring buildings were not included in the reports as there was no access to the buildings; and

WHEREAS the neighbors stated that there were no requests for access for interior survey reports; and

WHEREAS the neighbors stated that there were no notices of the pending project except for the notice of the CB8M Landmarks Committee meeting; and

WHEREAS the applicant did not consult with the community, an important part of the approval process; and

WHEREAS, the architect and builder of 118 East 95th Street did not intend for this house to have a cellar because of the bedrock; and

WHEREAS the architects and builders for the neighboring houses did not intend that these houses were to have cellars because of the bedrock; and

WHEREAS the proposed ground floor plan creates open space at the north end while accommodating a new bathroom and new smaller mechanical closet; and

WHEREAS the proposed cellar plan accommodates a new laundry, additional mechanical space, and new storage space; and

WHEREAS the proposed cellar is divided about equally between the usable space and the circulation space; and

WHEREAS the proposed cellar is not used efficiently; and

WHEREAS the applicant did not demonstrate that there was no other space within the house to accommodate the proposed uses for the cellar; and

WHEREAS it can be inappropriate to add a floor above the roof of a building whose design did not anticipate an enlargement or cannot accommodate an enlargement visually; and

WHEREAS it can be inappropriate to add a floor below the ground floor due to the risk to the building and to the surrounding buildings of damage due to the vibration from the excavation; and

WHEREAS 118 East 95th Street was designed without a cellar due to bedrock up to the surface of the site; and

WHEREAS the bedrock precluded creating a cellar when the house was built; and

WHEREAS the proposed excavation today of the bedrock poses extreme hazards for 118 East 95th Street and surrounding buildings; and

WHEREAS the design process ignored the community; and

WHEREAS the design process appears to have discounted possibilities within the current floors to accommodate the proposed uses for the cellar, including space gained at the northern end of the ground floor; and

WHEREAS the design of the original architect should be respected; and

WHREAS the period in which the house was built should be acknowledged in not changing a fundamental aspect of the design; and

WHEREAS the proposed excavation to create a cellar is not contextual and appropriate within the historic district;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this application is **DISAPPROVED.**

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Anthony Cohn and David Helpern*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Anthony Cohn and David Helpern
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District