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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

July 20, 2026

Linda Kersavage, Chair
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
One Center Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

RE: The Spence School: 56 East 93rd Street (Individual Landmark) and 1307-09 Madison Avenue (Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District) – *Sara Grant, AIA, Partner, MBB Architects* – 1307-1309 Madison Avenue is Neo-Georgian style building designed by George V. Harvey in 1890 with updates to the façade by Moore & Landsiedel in 1930; 56 East 93rd Street (The William Goadby and Florence Baker Lowe House, aka the "Lowe Mansion") was designed by Walker & Gillette and constructed in 1930. Application included extension at all floors into the two buildings' rear yards to provide internal connections into the contiguous Lowe Mansion to their east, and an improved mechanicals and an elevator bulkhead; the buildings' rooftops will provide outdoor play area for the Lower School. The proposal will require minimum exterior work on the Mansion, primarily to connect to the row houses and its west lot line. The buildings' current Madison Avenue façades will remain in place and will be refreshed utilizing appropriately similar materials. The general organizational scheme and material composition of the facades will be retained, with the exception of the existing entrance doors, storefront glazing, and the added floor's new rooftop profile.

Dear Chair Kersavage,

> **WHEREAS** the Spence School Application includes two buildings on two different tax lots; and
>
> **WHEREAS** 56 East 93rd Street is an Individual Landmark and 1307-09 Madison Avenue is in the Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District;

THIS APPLICATION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: PART A – Introduction and 56 East 93rd Street, and PART B – Integration and 1307-09 Madison Avenue.

Part A—Introduction and 56 East 93rd Street

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on July 15, 2026, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of in 41 favor, 3 opposed, 0 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** the Spence School seeks to join 56 East 93rd Street and 1307-09 Madison Avenue to create an enlarged Lower School; and
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> **WHEREAS** 56 East 93rd Street is an Individual Landmark; and
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> **WHEREAS** 1307-09 Madison Avenue is in the Expanded Carnegie Hill District; and
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> **WHEREAS** 56 East 93rd Street, the "Lowe Mansion," currently serves as the Lower School building; and

WHEREAS 1307-09 Madison Avenue will provide space for the enlargement of the Lower School; and

WHEREAS the Project Goals are Stem for Girls, Play and Outdoors, Accessibility, and Infrastructure; and

WHEREAS 1307-09 will be connected to 56 East 93rd Street to meet the programmatic needs of the School; and

WHEREAS the Mansion will be preserved and undergo minimal changes; and

WHEREAS the rear yard between 1307 and 1309 and the Mansion will be infilled; and

WHEREAS the Mansion will undergo structural modifications where the row houses meet the Mansion; and

WHEREAS the addition to the rear roof of the Mansion will not be visible from 93rd Street; and

WHEREAS the major materials for the Mansion will remain limestone, slate, and brick; and

WHEREAS the restoration of the Mansion is appropriate for the Individual Landmark;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Application for the **Restoration of the Mansion is APPROVED as presented.**

Part B—Integration and 1307-1309 Madison Avenue

At the Full board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on July 15, 2026, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 24 in favor, 19 opposed, 1 abstention, and 0 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS the two rowhouses, 1307 and 1309, were built as part of a five rowhouse development; and

WHEREAS the cellar level of 1307-1309 will be excavated to match the cellar level of the below grade gym in the Mansion; and

WHEREAS the cellar level in 1307-1309 will be replaced by two cellar levels whose combined floor-to-floor heights will be the same as the floor-to-floor height of the gym in the Mansion; and

WHEREAS the floor-to-floor heights 0f 1307-09 will change to match the floor-to-floor heights in the Mansion thereby matching the floor levels of the Mansion; and

WHEREAS the restructuring of the floors of 1307-09 will include a one-floor vertical enlargement and a double height space on the second floor; and

WHEREAS 1307-1309 and the Manson will have five floors above grade, 1307-1309 will have two floors below the first floor, and the Mansion will have a partial floor below the first floor and a full cellar floor below the partial floor and first floor; and

WHEREAS the full cellar level of the Mansion will be the location of a geothermal system with standing column wells to serve the Mansion and 1307-1309; and

WHEREAS there is an existing play yard in the rear of the Mansion on a low roof over the first floor; and

WHEREAS the proposed roof of 1307-09 will be at the same elevation as the roof of the Mansion; and

WHEREAS there will be another play yard on the high roof of the Mansion and a ball cage on the proposed roof of 1307-09; and

WHEREAS the geothermal system will eliminate the need for a cooling tower; and

WHEREAS there will be only one mechanical element on the roof in a screened area at the western end of 1307-09; and

WHEREAS the proposed massing of the enlargement of 1307-09 will be out of scale with the Mansion and will change the scale of the Madison Avenue street fronts; and

WHEREAS the northern face of the connection structure in the rear yard will be 40 feet back from the building line at East 93rd Street; and

WHEREAS the current height of the roof of 1307-1309 is 50 feet above mean curb level and the height of the Mansion is 69 feet above mean curb level; and

WHEREAS the contiguous roof of 1309, the rear infill, and the Mansion will be at the same elevation; and

WHEREAS the top of the ball cage will be at elevation 89'-3," just below the elevator machine room at 89'-8", the highest element in the complex; and

WHEREAS the north elevation of the Mansion will appear unchanged in that the roof top play yard will be set back behind the line of sight from across East 93rd Street; and

WHEREAS the proposed elevation of the west façade of 1307-09 will eliminate the existing pediment as part of the vertical enlargement; and

WHEREAS the pattern of the punched in windows on the Madison Avenue façade will be retained and another floor of windows extending the pattern will be added; and

WHEREAS the top floor on 1307-09 will have continuous glazing set at a slight angle; and

WHEREAS aligning the floors of 1307-09 with the floors of the Mansion will create awkward conditions at the heads of many of the punched in windows; and

WHEREAS the line of sight from across Madison Avenue currently extends to just above the existing parapet; and

WHEREAS the line of sight from across Madison Avenue will meet the proposed enlarged façade at the level of the new punched in windows; and

WHEREAS the rear yard infill will have a simple glass façade that will defer to the architecture of the Mansion; and

WHEREAS the columns at the proposed two-story front façade of 1307-09 will be restored; and

WHEREAS there will be a screen behind the glass at the street level of 1307-09 to emit light into the space and provide privacy for the students; and

WHEREAS the screen will eliminate transparency and create a blank face at the street level glazing; and

WHEREAS the west façade of 1307-09 will have restored and new stucco, and punched in wood windows painted black; and

WHEREAS the materials for the Addition will be brick and bronze panels; and

WHEREAS the materials on the roof will be bronze screening for mechanical, painted steel, and near vanishing mesh for play space; and

WHEREAS the reservations cited at the Board meeting and set forth above include the following: an enlargement that will be out of scale with the mansion and out of scale with the Madison Avenue street fronts, that will eliminate the pediment on the Madison Avenue façade, that will have a blank or non-transparent façade at street level, and that will have visible, awkward conditions at the heads of many punched in windows due to the change in floor elevations; and

WHEREAS the reservations should be considered in the development of the design; and

WHEREAS the proposed conversion and enlargement of the rowhouses is integrated with the Mansion; and

WHEREAS 1307-1309 is contextual and appropriate within the Historic District;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Application for the Conversion and Enlargement of 1307-09 Madison Avenue** is **APPROVED as presented.**

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Anthony Cohn, David Helpern, and Jane Parshall*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Anthony Cohn, David Helpern, and Jane Parshall
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York State
Honorable Zohran Mamdani, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Brad Hoylman-Sigal, 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 Julie Menin, Speaker, NYC Council, 5th Council District
Honorable Virginia Maloney, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Elsie Encarnacion, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District