



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

# **Testimony on 44-54 Ninth Avenue/351-355 West 14th Street - Gansevoort Market Historic District**

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June 2, 2020

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**Testimony on 44-54 Ninth Avenue/351-355 West 14th Street** Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Assembly Member Richard Gottfried before the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

We are Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, and Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried. We represent the Gansevoort Market Historic District and Chelsea neighborhoods.

We are writing to express our opposition to the application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness for various changes to the exterior and construction of a new nine story commercial office in-fill behind and attached to 44-54 Ninth Avenue and 351-355 West 14th Street, unless the changes and recommendations made by Manhattan Community Board Four are realized.

We support CB4's recommendation to reduce the tower from nine stories to six stories to maintain consistency with the streetscape as per the Gansevoort Market Historic District Designation report. We believe it is important that this building follow the precedents set by LPC which scaled back proposals at 70-74 Gansevoort Street and 837 Washington Street. The proposed tower would overshadow the 1840's row houses, as well as block the light and air of the surrounding residences.

The parapet adds an unnecessary story to the proposed structure. It should be reduced to the code height minimum of 42". This change would ensure that the building is also in line with the step-down effect of the block's facades.

The proposal calls for demolition of the rowhouses with the exception of their facades. While we are pleased to see the restoration of the 1840's Greek Revival style facades, the rear walls and western side wall along 14th Street are also key pieces of preserving these rowhouses. LPC should not approve full demolition of the rear walls and only allow for alterations where connections to the tower are necessary. We ask that existing windowsills along the rear wall be lowered when necessary for points of access to the second floor of the tower.

"Facadism" is not a synonym for preservation. The interiors of the rowhouses will be visible to the public and thus preservation must be taken into consideration. We urge LPC to require the applicant to preserve the common property line walls to maintain the historical divisions among the rowhouses as CB4 has also suggested.

We thank the LPC for considering these remarks, and we hope that you follow the community's recommendations. The rowhouses of Gansevoort Plaza are an important piece of New York City's architectural history worthy of protection.