



June 27, 2023

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR 277 CANAL STREET, AKA 277-289 CANAL STREET, and 418-422 BROADWAY**

Good day, Chair Carroll and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking today on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The Conservancy did not support the SoHo/NoHo rezoning because of concerns that it would encourage the demolition of smaller historic buildings and facilitate new, taller, bulkier construction that would disrupt the scale of these historic districts. Therefore, we're pleased to say that this proposal, one of the first under the new zoning, has taken great strides to respect the context of SoHo's streetscape.

Although the new building would be taller than most in its vicinity, this corner site is at the intersection of two major streets at the edge of the District, where it will not overwhelm the low-scale, cast-iron structures that define the District. The fenestration and massing of the upper floors have historic proportions that are contextual with nearby buildings. The materials reflect the existing historic structure.

That being said, we do believe the design can be improved, to make it an even better neighbor. As this is a corner building, the penthouse is likely to be visible, but the refined detailing of the façade does not extend to the design of the penthouse, which now seems like an afterthought. We hope that more articulation can be added to the penthouse so that it will appear integrated with the rest of the building.

We are also concerned about the bronze-toned aluminum spandrel panels. Having seen aluminum spandrel panels turn out poorly on other buildings, we have concerns that they will have an artificial "pasted-on" quality here. When spandrels were a part of façade design historically, they clearly conveyed the structure of the building and were sometimes even adorned with ornament. In the renderings of this building, the spandrels do not read as a different material from the terra cotta elements. We would suggest either switching the spandrel material from aluminum to terra cotta or making sure that the design details of the spandrels are carefully thought-out and reviewed by LPC staff. Wide flanges and an appropriately recessed plane of installation could make the spandrels seem more a part of the structure and avoid a contemporary appearance.

Regarding the storefront and signage master plan, the amount of signage is excessive and the illuminated acrylic lettering is not an appropriate material for a building in a historic district. The storefront infill would benefit from larger glazed transoms, rather than the proposed band of louvers, and a higher bulkhead that would recall the storefronts clearly shown in historic photographs of this building.

The SoHo Cast Iron Historic District is a remarkable resource that attracts residents, businesses, and tourists like few others. Any changes must be undertaken with great care. We believe, that with some modifications, the proposed building can be an appropriate addition to the neighborhood.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Conservancy's views.