

September 9, 2008

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED NEW BUILDING AT 414-422 GREENWICH STREET AND A PROPOSED ROOFTOP ADDITION TO 401-411 WASHINGTON STREET IN THE TRIBECA NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Good day, Chairman Tierney and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Conservancy staff have reviewed the boards presented today for a new building at 414-422 Greenwich Street, and a proposed roof top addition to the adjacent building at 401-411 Washington Street.

The Conservancy supports this innovative treatment for designing a new building within a historic district. Creating a mirror image of the existing building in a contemporary monochrome version is a solution which demonstrates that context can be a positive attribute. The proposed restoration plan for the existing building, including cleaning and repointing the brick façade, and repairing the terra cotta cornice, will be a welcome improvement. While these plans look very promising, it would be regrettable if this clever scheme is marred by a bulky rooftop addition to the existing building, and extending to the new building. The addition should be set further back, so that it is less visible from the street.

This plan succeeds in part because of its siting, taking up three sides of the block, and seeming to fill in what now looks like a missing piece. In order for this highly-visible project to succeed, it is critical that the Commission continue to pay close attention to the execution of the plan and all of its details when construction is underway.

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