

**THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY**

April 22, 2008

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C.  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE MODIFICATION OF WINDOW  
OPENINGS, AND OTHER PROPOSED CHANGES, AT 18 GRAMERCY PARK SOUTH, GRAMERCY  
PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT.**

Good day, Chair Tierney and Commissioners. I am Ken Lustbader speaking on behalf of The New York Landmarks Conservancy.

The Conservancy has reviewed the proposal to enlarge all the upper floor window openings at 18 Gramercy Park South and to restore the special windows on the ground floor. The building was originally built as a women's residential hotel in 1927. The typical rooms were dormitory-size and the windows were scaled accordingly. The hotel's shared spaces including reception and dining rooms were located on the ground floor. These spaces featured large multi pane casement windows, some with transoms.

The proposal seeks to enlarge all the dormitory-scaled six-over-six residential windows and replace them with slightly larger six-over-six windows. Specifically, all the upper story window openings are to be widened by 8 inches and their sills lowered by 16 inches. The modification to all the windows will be executed at the same time so that all the windows will match. The new sash will be six-over-six and their finish will be based on color analysis of the original windows.

The ground floor windows, which are special windows, will be retained and restored. Primary and secondary entrances on the ground floor will be restored to their original appearance and the canopy at the main entrance will be replaced with a somewhat smaller, more tailored canopy. In addition, the cast iron columns supporting the entrance portico will be restored and a new bluestone sidewalk will be installed. The proposal also includes minor modifications to rooftop bulkheads.

While increasing the size of window openings in an historic building is something that we would generally not endorse, in this instance there is a case to be made that the size of the original windows is not as important as the overall pattern of fenestration and that the larger windows actually seem to harmonize more successfully with the non-dormitory character of the residential architecture in the Gramercy Park Historic District. Therefore, the Conservancy finds this proposal to be appropriate based on its unique merits. The enlarged six-over-six windows will maintain the traditional, residential appearance of the facades and will match the original windows in configuration, detail and operation. The restoration of the ground floor windows, which are by far the most prominent and visible, will return these historic units to first-class condition. Other improvements such as the new canopy and the new bluestone sidewalk are positive contributions to the Historic District.

In Conclusion, the Conservancy finds all the various components of the proposal to be carefully thought out and detailed and in keeping with the historic character of the Historic District. We therefore raise no objection to the Commission's approval of the application.

Thank you for the opportunity to present The New York Landmarks Conservancy's views.