



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f
431 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f
www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov

Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

December 7, 2016

Carl Weisbrod, Chair
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

Re: Application No. M 790651 F ZSM – 1991 Broadway

Dear Chair Weisbrod:

I write in regard to the application by 1991 Broadway Owner, LLC for a modification to a previously-approved special permit to allow design changes within the covered public plaza at 1991 Broadway (Block 1139, Lot 7501), located in the Upper West Side neighborhood of the Borough of Manhattan.

The commercial space that directly abuts the covered plaza has been vacant since the departure of Ollie's, the previous restaurant tenant. With a new tenant, Sugar Factory Restaurant, secured, the applicant is proposing a number of changes to the special permit plaza for planting, seating, lighting, flooring, and other amenities. These changes will also include the addition of public art.

I fully support the effort to improve what has been a suboptimal public amenity for the neighborhood. I also appreciate the applicant's effort to work with Manhattan Community Board 7 to modify the proposal to include free Wi-Fi internet access and prominent exterior signage for the space signaling its public nature.

However, I do take issue with the proposed design of the public art installation. In particular, the proposed art wall on the south side of the covered plaza would feature a pattern of painted dots that is an obvious reference to the multi-colored dot logo of the Sugar Factory Restaurant in terms of its cadence, color choice, and arrangement. This seems like a deliberate piece of commercial advertisement rather than public art, and I don't consider the design appropriate for a publicly-accessible space or worthy of the character and context of the Upper West Side. It creates a visual signal that the improved space belongs to patrons of the new tenant, not to the general public.

Finally, one reason that Lincoln Center's Atrium at West 62nd Street and Broadway is successful as a POPS is because it is staffed. I hope that the 1991 Broadway redesign will include personnel.

Public space is precious in our changing city. We need to do everything we can to ensure that people feel welcome here and that a place like this is meant for them. I applaud the applicant for the commitment to improve this space, but I urge them and the City to work together toward a truly public design.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style for the first name and a mix of uppercase and lowercase for the last name.

Gale A. Brewer