

Hearing Appeal of August 26th, 2015

Good afternoon, Hearing Officer Ms. Mahmoud and Fire Inspector Ms. Schaff:

Please know that I have given serious deliberation to my appeal with regard to these fire codes.

I am Mary Arvanitis, the owner, representing the Original Coney Island buildings at 444 and 448 St. Peter Street. I am appealing numbers 3 and 4: door swing direction and panic release.

Please note these buildings date 1858 and 1888 and are registered for their historical significance. My family has restored the interior and exterior of these buildings to their original period of time. Immense consideration and work met city codes. We regard their maintenance and safety as paramount. Our doors are utilized to meet crucial needs as well as represent history. The doors play an indispensable role for several bona fide reasons: providing essential ventilation, providing protection to ward off pesky rodents, bugs, etc., preserving historical genuineness, and safeguarding our patrons and properties.

There are 4 sets of access doors that are double doors. The outer doors swing out from right to left and the inner doors swing in from left to right. Most assuredly, it is crucial to retain the use of the double doors. Additionally, the extraordinary costs associated with modification to the existing door systems while maintaining historical integrity of the buildings would be an undue hardship.

The outer doors hold screens and are imperative for our ventilation system.. The buildings do not have air conditioning, and we rely upon two large exhaust fans—one is positioned at the rear of the Café and the other is positioned at the rear of the Tavern to keep the buildings cool and well ventilated all year round, especially during warmer seasons. The exhaust fans draw cool air in through the screen doors at the front of the buildings and push warm air out the rear of the buildings. This cross ventilation keeps the interior of our buildings at a comfortable temperature or moderately cool. The loss of door screens would be extremely detrimental and cause stifling, sticky, and unbearable conditions. In addition, this type of ventilation aids in and is essential to the operation of our restaurant business.

Please note that because we are able to keep the inner doors open and have the means to provide doors that swing out in the direction of travel, our two-door system works well for the safety of our patrons and properties.

Our two-door system keeps out pesky rodents and other unwanted guests. This serves us very successfully.

The buildings' historical significance was uncovered during our restoration process in the new millennium. The doors play a significant role in time since the 1800's. We have expended time, arduous efforts, monies to restore and meet city codes.

To restate, based upon the paramount need to retain our crucial existing two-door ventilation system, to preserve historical significance, to deter undue hardship related to the expense of modifications, and to provide the assurance and ability to keep out unhealthy, unwanted rodents, bugs, etc., we are soundly appealing the changes to our doors.