CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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March 28, 2017 Start: 11:48 a.m. Recess: 12:19 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.

16th Fl

B E F O R E: PETER A. KOO

Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma

Deborah L. Rose Rosie Mendez Stephen T. Levin Inez D. Barron Ben Kallos

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Lauren George, Director
Intergovernmental and Community Affairs
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lisa Kersavage, Director Strategic Planning Landmarks Preservation Commission

Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research Landmarks Preservation Commission

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[background comments] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning. I am Council Member Koo, Chair of the Subcommittee on 4 5 Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. We are 6 joined by Council Members-I don't see the list here. 7 Council Member Palma, Council Member Mendez, Council Member Levin, Council Member Rose and Council Member 8 9 Barron. We are also joined by Council Member 10 Perkins. Today we are holding a public hearing on LU 11 593 an application for a landmark designation by the 12 Landmarks Preservation Commission of the United-of the United Nations First through-First Floor 13 14 Interiors located at 1 and 2 United Nation's Plaza in 15 Council Member Garodnick's district in Manhattan. 16 The Council member is supportive of this designation and we expect to vote on it at the conclusion of 17 18 today's public hearing. We will be also voting on 19 four applications for landmark designations that were 20 laid over from our February 27 and March 9 hearings. 21 These four applications are the last of LPC's Backlog 22 Initiative Designations. These items are as follows-23 the Backlog Initiative items are as follows: 24 sorry.

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The first item is LU 579 the Young Men's Christian Association Building know as the Jackie Robinson YMCA Youth Center locate at 181 West 135th Street in Council Member Perkins' district in Manhattan. A public hearing on this application was held on March 9th. The Council Member supports this designation.

The second item is LU 580 the Lowe's 175th Street Theater, located at 4140-4156 Broadway in Council Member Rodriguez's district in Manhattan. A public hearing was held on this application on February 27th. The Council Member supports this designation.

The third items is LU 581, the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church of Flushing also know as the Brown Street Community Church located at 143-11 Roosevelt Avenue in the district I represent in Queens. A public hearing was held on this application on February 27.

The fourth item is LU 582, the Lakeman Cortelyou Taylor House located at 2286 Richmond Road
in Council Member Matteo's district in Staten Island.
A public hearing was held on this application on
February 27. The council member is now supportive of

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this designation. I will now open the public hearing Before we start, I want to read Council Member Garodnick's statement of support. [pause] This statement of support form Daniel

Garodnick, Council Member. It says Council Member Peter Koo, Chair of the Committee on Landmarks and Public Siting and Maritime Uses. Dear Chair Koo, I write in support of this landmark designation of the United Nations Hotel First Floor Interiors at 1 and 2 United Nations Plaza. These extraordinary spaces with the extraordinary use of mirrors, marble and combs (sic) as well as the distinctive lighting designs, play an important role in New York's cultural and economic salons of the late 1970s and They are beautiful examples of late 20th 1980s. Century modern and post-modern design. The United Nations space is historic-historically significant and as practically impressive, and thus well deserving of land marking. I hope that the committee and ultimately the Council approves this-this designation. Sincerely, Daniel Garodnick.

LPC will present on this item, and then we will hear testimony from the public. May we have Lauren George and Lisa Kersavage of the Land Mark

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2 Preservation Commission. Please identify yourself 3 and start now.

LAUREN GEORGE: Good morning Council Members. I'm Lauren George, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Affairs at Landmarks Preservation Commission. I also have with me my colleague Lisa Kersavage, Director of Strategic Planning of Strategic Planning at Landmarks [laughs] and Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research also joining me today. So I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today on the commission's designation of the U.N. Hotel First Floor Interior located 1 and 2 UN Plaza. After holding a public hearing on November 22nd, 2016 the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted unanimously to designate the interiors on January 17th of this year. At the public hearing 15 people spoke in support of designation including representatives of Docomomo U.S., Docomomo Tri-State and New York District, Historic Districts Council, Municipal Art Society of New York and the New Your Landmarks Conservancy, Save the Grill and the Society for the Architecture of the City. LPC also received a resolution in support from Manhattan Community Board 6. The Ambassador Grill

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2 and Hotel Lobby are significant examples of late 3 modern and post-modern design by the internationally 4 acclaimed architecture firm Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates. This is NYC's youngest interior landmark designation, and the only interior 6 7 designation that celebrates the post-modern period. These two interiors are located on the first floor of 8 One UN New York, a hotel and office complex at the southwest corner of First Avenue and East 44th 10 11 Street. It was built by the United Nations 12 Development Corporation two phases. The first phase 13 of construction was completed in 1975 and the second phase in 1983. Both interiors are located on the 14 15 first floor. The hotel lobby parallels the entrance 16 and driveway along East 44th Street, and the 17 Ambassador Grill at the rear separated by an elevator 18 lobby. The designated landmark site includes the 19 dining and bar area and the Ambassador Grill and the 20 primary features of the hotel lobby as you see here, 21 including the domed reception area and entrance foyer 2.2 and ramped hallway. Built in an era during-when 2.3 relatively few new hotels are being constructed in New York City these lavish interiors are 24

exceptionally well preserved. They blend modern and

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historical motifs that express the shifting character 2 3 of American architecture in the late '70s and early 4 The U shaped Ambassador Grill and Lounge 5 opened first in 1976. It's an extremely theatrical space featuring a patterned black and white marble 6 7 floor, mirrored walls and a vaulted faux skylight 8 backed by illuminated Mylar panels. The elegant hotel lobby was completed in 1993. It features an atrium like reception area and ramped hallway with 10 11 free standing marble columns of unusual design. distinctive features suggest the growing influence of 12 13 post-modern aesthetics during the 1980s. 14 interiors were celebrated by contemporary critics. 15 Paul Goldberger called the Grill New York's first 16 hotel-first good hotel dining room since the 1920s. 17 Carter Weisman described it as glittering piece of 18 public theater and Ada Louse Huxtable wrote that 19 these spaces have real style, the style and 20 conviction of their own time. In her 2011 monograph 21 on Roche, Architectural Historian Eeva-Lisa Pelkonen 2.2 called these spaces significant representations of an 2.3 With its over-the-top interiors, the hotel became a destination and an active participant in the 24

disco era of the '70s and '80s when New York's

economy finally turned around. Completed seven

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3 years apart, these marvelously inventive and well

4 maintained interiors represent some of the best

5 interior spaces of the '70s and '80s. We hope that

6 the Council will affirm our designation today. Thank

you, and any questions have, we're here to answer.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any questions from our members. UPC? No? Thank you. Are there members of the public who wish to testify? We have Mr. Simeon Bankoff. [pause]

Members. Simeon Bankoff from the Historic Districts
Council. It's my pleasure to testify in strong
support of this interior designation. We are—I'd
like to take a moment to sort of thank the Landmarks
Commission for their recent very strong stances on—in
designating a number of important interiors in New
York City. As the Council know, interior landmarks
are among the most—among the most rare of the
landmarks. They are also among the most difficult to
regulate. So we are extraordinarily happy that
they're taking this stance on regulating really what
amounts to a lot of glass and lights, and—and glass
and lights can easily change. So this is something

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that was very delicate, and we are very thankful that they are designating. I have-I had the pleasure of going to this restaurant and bar a couple of times, and it's-it's just a wonderful experience I recommend to everyone to-to go on. I think they're-they're about to re-open. The only concern that we have is that in the original designation there was a portion of the front hallway, which was as you walk down there's the sloped entranced and then to the right, which is closer to the front of the building, which is the reception waiting area for the-for the lobby and for the restaurant, which is-complete the other piece with-with the rest of it, which has been-which was not part of the designation, and we feel that for whatever reason, you know, it's very possible that could be adapted into another use for the-for the hotel. We do think that with proper landmarks oversight it would be a wonderful addition to this designation but other than that, in strong support of this. Thank you, very much.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any questions from our members? Seeing none, thank you. Are there any other members of the public who wish to testify? Seeing none, the public hearing on LU 593

1 2 is now closed. Before we move onto a vote, I want to 3 say a few words about LU 581, the designation 4 application for Browne Street Community Church, which is in my district. The Browne Street Community Church formerly known as the Protestant Reformed 6 7 Dutch Church of Flushing opened in 1892. 8 church is a unique example of Roman-Romanesque Revival Style and features standing stained glass windows designed by Tiffany Glass Company. 10 There is 11 no dispute that the-there's no dispute that it is 12 beautiful and historic. However, in 2002, the Chair 13 of the Church Building Committee proposed demolit-14 demolition-demolishing the historic structure to 15 allow its developer to build a 200-story residential 16 building on-in exchange for the construction of a new 17 church and payment of \$1 million. Members of the 18 congregation, the local community board, and 19 preservationists objected and the demolition plan was 20 helved while alternative plans were considered. 21 Recognizing the artistic and cultural significant of 2.2 the structure, as well as the track of demolition or 2.3 part of all of it, the Landmark Preservation Commission calendared the Browne Street Church for 24

landmark designation in 2003. At that time LPC

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1 proposed designating the entire lot even though the 2 3 church only occupies a fraction of it, a parking and 4 an annex occupying the rest. Respecting the financial lease of the church, its non-public status is special admission in the vessel(sic) of the church 6 7 property itself. My office worked closely with the 8 LPC to redraw the designation map to exclude the parking lot and annex. When LPC finally issued its designation report on December 13, 2016, they 10 11 accepted my office's recommendations freeing the church to exercise most of its development ways. 12 13 City Planning Commission's Report on the Designation 14 confirmed this: The CBC report notes the redrawn 15 designation area, and leaves the church with over 16 100,000 square of unused development-developmental 17 ways. Seeing that there is ample designation, some 18 members of the congregation has expressed and 19 steadfast support while others have expressed 20 concerns. To explain how land marking works, I 21 convened multiple meetings with church leadership. The LPC Chair and the Executive Director, the staff 2.2 2.3 of the Council Land Use Division and the Landmarks Conservancy. During these meetings, LPC explained 24

that the land mark designation only applied to the

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exterior walls and the windows of the church. 2 3 internal model-the internal modifications will not require a certificate of proposed witness (sic) from 4 LPC. LPC has assured me that you will do everything you can to process such requests through this expite-6 7 expedited certificate to upload the effect and 8 service, which typically happens within 48 hours of submission. In order to make this process as early as possible, LPC has explained that it has a staffer 10 11 dedicated full-time to servicing religious institutions. LPC has also expressed its clear 12 13 understanding of the church's need to make 14 accessibility alterations and stress that you will 15 not work with the church--and stress that you will 16 work with the church to look for ways to accommodate 17 such needs even when they may have some impact on the 18 exterior. Finally, since February 27, when we held a 19 public hearing on this application for designation I 20 have received over 345 emails asking me to support 21 This designation application is not being using. 2.2 I have done my best to enable the church to monetize 2.3 the lands in your controls. Feeling it could develop over 90% of the allowable four areas on the site 24

while preserving the ability of future generations to

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enjoy this beautiful example of our art and architecture. For these reasons, I support the designation. I now recognize Council Member Perkins to speak on LU 579, the designation of the Young Men's Christian Association Building also known as Jackie Robinson YMCA Youth Center located in his district. Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: [off mic] Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I-I want [pause] [on mic] Thank you, Mr. Chair. I-I am honored to-to give my support to the Landmark designation of the Harlem YMCA at 100-181 West 135th Street in my district. The YMCA Building now known as the Jackie Robinson YMCA Youth Center was built in the early 20th Century and was one of the first African-American YMCA buildings constructed in New York City. Although its construction was created to segregate African-Americans from the Caucasian individuals, it was and still is a center of intellectual and social life for the African-American community as is the new now Schomburg Center. It's Italian Neo-Renaissance Revival Style with its high base in arts and the kind of opening was unique to its time. Notable individuals who were associated with it lectured at

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it and held meetings in the Y, Claude McKay, John Henry Clark, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Jackie Robinson, Ralph Ellison, Adam Clayton Powel, Jr. and organizations such as Coordinated Committee on Civil Rights, the Harlem Writers' Workshop, just to name a few. Land marking this historic site will remind us all and others of the rich contributions of the Harlem Renaissance period. I fully support along with my colleagues and community this landmark designation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. [pause] I want to say we welcome Council Member Matteo and then Council Member Kallos on-of our committee. Council Member Matteo, do you want to-Wait, one-one minute yeah. Before you move your marked side. (sic) Thank I moved it for Joseph. Yeah. Okay, yeah. last thing today we are voting on LU 582 for the designation of the Lakeman-Cortelyou-Taylor House in Council Member Matteo's district. I know the council member has fought long and hard and had many conversation with the property owner, this community and the Landmarks Preservation Commission about this landmark designation and the fact that this item has been on the LPC calendar. I will now recognize

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Council Member Matteo to offer his remarks on this designation. Council Member Matteo.

COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you, Chair Koo. Before I give my prepared statement, I just want to thank my colleagues in this process for listening to my concerns and having the openmindedness of the-the distinct new-distinct issues involved in-in this land marking case. I-I also appreciate landmarks and their position. None of this has been argumentative. We, you know, we just have different opinions on where we're going on this particular property. So again, I just want to thank my colleagues for listening to my concerns and-and taking them into consideration before you vote. general philosophy in land marking cases in my district is to defer to the owner in the favor of property rights. In this case, however, I feel even more strongly that we should concede to the owner's request to not have his home land marked because he has been an upstanding and responsible member of the community who has proven that he values his building's heritage. The property in question on 2286 Richmond Road in the heart of my district is a Dutch Colonial home that is owned by George

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Kirshhoffer. (sic) The home has been part of his 2 3 family since grand-since his grandfather purchased it 4 in 1927. George grew up in this home and raised his family-his own family there. Along with his children he has continued the family business Moravian Flowers 6 7 on the lot next door. In 2001, George invested nearly half a million dollars to restore the home to its 8 original glory removing an addition to the front and completing extensive roof work. The Landmark 10 11 Commission noted not only the home's excellent 12 condition, but the great care the owner took to 13 restore its historical appearance. While the family has no plans to sell the property nor the family 14 15 business, George has serious concerns about the 16 costs and difficulties of maintenance and repair and 17 accompanying landmark regulations. While I 18 understand the concerns expressed by the 19 preservationists that this historical site be 20 protected, I have complete confidence in George and his family that they will continue to do just that. 21 He has earned the benefit of the doubt. Also, 2.2 2.3 today's vote will not preclude us from restarting this landmark process in the future. And again, I do 24

believe that this is a different circumstance.

MARITIME USES 18 1 2 the owner of the property was here at the hearing. 3 He—he certainly proved that he cares about this house 4 and he is going to keep it in pristine condition, and I do not believe at this time that we should be moving forward with land marking the property, and 6 7 with that, I will send it back to the Chair. 8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. I will now 9 couple LUs 579, 580, 581, 582, and 593 for a vote to approve. Please note: A vote to approve LU 582 is a 10 11 vote to disapprove the designation of Lakeman-Cortelyou-Taylor House. Counsel will-will please 12 13 call the vote. 14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Koo. 15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye. LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Palma. 16 17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: [off mic] Aye. 18 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Mendez. 19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: [pause] 20 Permission to explain my vote? 21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yeah, please go ahead. 2.2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I will be voting 2.3 aye on all including aye to disapprove No. 4. In-in

the matter at hand, I do feel that the owner has made a lot of repairs and kept the building, the integrity

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and the architectural importance of the building, and—and I—dealing with our Landmarks building know that there are not enough grants when you're landmarked to get the repairs done that you need to in these buildings. Based on that, and on the fact that the owner has given Council Member Matteo a document that he does not intend to sell, that this building has been owned by the family for decades and decades. I am going to vote with the Council Member. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Permission to explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes, go ahead.

on—on all items as well, and I want to associate myself with the comments of Council Member Mendez.

I'd—I'd also like to add that I do believe that we have in this Council a responsibility to weigh to the best of our ability and—and our conscience the and use matters in the districts that we represent, and I do feel that Council Member Matteo has weighted the considerations with this particular designation very

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thoroughly and conscientiously. And I'm heartened that he has-because it's not without reservations that I vote age on this, but I take to heart his assurance that if something were to proceed in terms of any type of alteration on this project, he wouldhe would consider taking up a designation in that instance but that he's worked with the owner of the building. I understand that the family that has owned this building going back almost 100 years, obviously they-they love this building and in a way that-that they have preserved it for the past 100 years. So I-I take that-those assurances to heart, and—and will—will look forward to continuing to work with Council Member Matteo if, in deed something were to change in the future, but with that, I do vote aye on all.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I vote aye [coughs] aye on all, and-and aye on LU 582 with the assurances of my colleague Steve Matteo. Thank you.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: For clarification in terms of how this was presented, did you say that

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2 to vote was to vote against that? Would you clarify
3 that for me, please?

CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] I do have the [on mic] IME.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Specifically as it pertains to 582.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Land Use is a lease to disapprove of the nature is difficult.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yeah, okay.

Thank you. I just wanted to be clear on that. With that understanding, I vote age and I just want to thank our Council Member Perkins for bringing to light the significance of the YMCA in Harlem particularly as it relates to African-American culture.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [pause]

Permission to explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes, please.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you to the committee chair and the staff for your great work. I want to apologize for my lateness. I—I vote aye on all and with regards to Land Use 582, I would like to just associate myself with my fellow colleagues, and—

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and champions for landmarks, Council Members Mendez and Levin. I'm disappointed with LPC and not being able to perhaps work with the owners to gain their support because I believe that Landmarks protections for this property would actually be an asset, and so whatever we can do with LPC so that owners are able to better understand that I'm disappointed in the city of New York because out Mayor has made a-a goal of preserving 120,000 units of affordable housing and many of the landmarked buildings would be and be as Council Member Mendez has already alluded to and stated it costs more to maintain landmarked buildings and we need to make sure that we provide support for landmarks, and we certainly have the funding to do so, and I just want to take a moment to appreciate Minority Leader Matteo's efforts in this working with LPC and working with the committee members, working with the owner on this one issue. There is are so many different issues that he has to deal with as the leader of the Republican Caucus in-in the body and district and just focusing on this specific issue and trying to find a positive resolution not just approaching it from a-a specific item. And-and New York City is a very big city, and it's hard for any

1	MARITIME USES 23
2	one member to have knowledge of all the other
3	districts and then so we have to rely on that local
4	member's expertise and in so doing I'm relying on
5	Council Member Matteo's and the Council Members also
6	indicating that should ownership change, should this
7	property be in jeopardy that needs Landmark
8	Preservation that he would, in fact, move forward
9	with requesting evaluation moving forward with the
10	Land Marks process and would actually support him in
11	that case. So I vote aye with my colleague. Thank
12	you.
13	CHAIRPERSON KOO: By a vote of 7 in the
14	affirmative, 0 in the negative, and 0 abstentions the
15	items are referred to the full Land Use committee
16	with the recommendation to approve. [background
17	comments]
18	CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Thank you.
19	Thank you[background comments] Thank you, members
20	of the public, my colleagues, my Counsel-

LEGAL COUNSEL: A point of clarification. [background comments]

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Oh, okay.

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LEGAL COUNSEL: The-the item-Item 582-the vote for Item 582 was approved, which means that

1	SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES 24
2	designation is forwarded to the full Land Use
3	Committee with the recommendation to disapprove the
4	designation.
5	CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Thank you,
6	members of public, my colleagues and Counsel and Land
7	Use staff. This meeting is adjourned. [gavel]
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World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 20, 2017