

TESTIMONY OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES ON THE DESIGNATION OF THE EDWARD RIDLEY & SONS DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDINGS IN MANHATTAN.

December 4, 2012

Good morning Council Members. My name is Jenny Fernández, Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here today to testify on the Commission's designation of the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings in Manhattan.

On June 23, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on the proposed designation of the former Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings and the proposed designation of the related Landmark site. Four people testified in support of designation, including a representative of Council Member Alan Gerson, the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, and the Historic Districts Council. A second hearing was held on June 22, 2010 in order to consider whether to include Lot 16 as part of the Landmark Site. Two representatives of the owner of Lots 15 and 16 testified against designation and two people testified in support, including a representative of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. A third hearing was held on September 11, 2012 at which a representative of the owner of Lot 15 expressed support for designation. On September 11, 2012 the Commission voted to designate the buildings a New York City individual landmark. Lot 16 was not included in the designation.

In the second half of 19th century, Edward Ridley & Sons was the largest department store on the Lower East Side. Founded by Edward Ridley in c. 1848, over the next three decades the business grew by converting buildings along Grand and Allen Streets – none of which survive. The adjoining properties at 315-317 Grand Street (aka 66-68 Allen Street) and 319-321 Grand Street (aka 65 Orchard Street) were commissioned by his sons, Edward A. Ridley and Arthur J. Ridley, in 1886. Designed by architect Paul F. Schoen, these Classical Revival-style structures were part of the store's most ambitious expansion to date. Five stories tall, this building campaign added considerable floor space and Ridley's was subsequently described in newspaper stories and advertisements as the largest retailer in New York City. By 1889, the store employed about 2,500 people – many who were women, neighborhood residents, and recent immigrants. Originally part of a vast retail emporium, these adjoining cast-iron buildings recall the era when Edward Ridley & Sons were among the Lower East Side's best-known and most successful merchants.

The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

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Name: Jenny Fernandez

Address: 1 Centre St

I represent: VPC

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Name: Joyce Mendelsohn

Address: 135 E 20th St NYC 10016

I represent: Friends of the Lower East

Address: 135 E 20th St

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Name: Joyce Mendelsohn

Address: 155 E 34th St NYC 10016

I represent: Myself author of the

Address: Lower East Side Remembered

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Name: MITCHELL GRUBLER

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