

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING &
MARITIME USES

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March 20, 2012
Start: 11:25 a.m.
Recess: 12:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - 16th Floor
250 Broadway

B E F O R E:

BRAD S. LANDER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Daniel J. Halloran III
Rosie Mendez
Annabel Palma
Diana Reyna
James Sanders, Jr.
Jumaane D. Williams

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jenny Fernandez
Director of Intergovernmental & Community Relations
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

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2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning,
3 I'm pleased to call ... no, excuse me. Good
4 morning, we're pleased to call this meeting of the
5 Land Use, City Council's Land Use Subcommittee on
6 Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses to
7 order, I'm New York City Council Member Brad
8 Lander, and we're joined this morning by Committee
9 Members Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Annabel Palma,
10 Jumaane Williams, Dan Halloran and Rosie Mendez,
11 who's taking a look from the other side of the
12 table this morning. We have one, two, three,
13 four, five Landmarks items on the calendar, and
14 I'm pleased to ask Jennie Fernandez from Landmarks
15 Preservation Commission to come up and present
16 them to us. We'll begin with Land Use #572,
17 Public School 102 at 190 Fordham Street in
18 Committee Member Vacca's district in the Bronx.

19 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
20 Lander and members of the Committee, my name is
21 Jenny Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental &
22 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
23 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the
24 Commission's designation of Public School 102,
25 later Public School 17, the City Island School, in

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2 the Bronx. On June 28th, 2011, the Landmarks
3 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
4 the proposed designation as a landmark of Public
5 School 102, later Public School 17, the City
6 Island School. Four people, including
7 representatives of the Historic Districts Council,
8 New York Conservancy and the Victorian Society of
9 New York, spoke in favor of designation. Staff
10 met with a representative of the condominium
11 owners who chose not to attend the public hearing.
12 On December 20th, 2011, the Commission voted to
13 designate the building a New York City Individual
14 Landmark. Located on City Island in the Bronx,
15 Public School 102 was constructed in 1897-98 and
16 served as the community's only school until 1931.
17 The architect of the two-story Georgian revival
18 style red brick-clad building was C.B.J. Snyder,
19 Superintendent of School Buildings for New York
20 City from 1891 until 1923. This is one of
21 Snyder's few extant school designs in this mode
22 and represents a suburban typology appropriate to
23 a larger lot size, in contrast to the constricted
24 building lots located on densely-built urban
25 blocks of Manhattan and Brooklyn, where Snyder

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2 pioneered the use of the H-plan school buildings
3 with exterior schoolyards ... courtyards. As
4 originally constructed, Public School 102 measured
5 roughly 65 by 87 feet, and was expanded in 1929-30
6 to meet the needs of a growing population. The
7 original school building then began to be used by
8 various community groups, the City Island
9 Historical Society and Nautical Museum still
10 occupies a portion. In 2000 part of the original
11 structure and an addition were converted into
12 condominium apartments. Despite alterations,
13 Public School 102 remains a rare example of
14 Snyder's use of the Georgian Revival style, is one
15 of the few small community schools by Snyder that
16 is extant and is an important reminder of the
17 period of this community's consolidation into the
18 City of New York. The Commission urges you to
19 affirm this designation.

20 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Ms.
21 Fernandez. Unfortunately, Committee Member Vacca
22 is not feeling well today, so he is not with us,
23 but he asked me to read this supportive letter
24 into the record, so I'll do that briefly, and then
25 if my colleagues have questions, we can do that.

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2 "Dear Colleagues, I fully support the designation
3 of former PS 102, City Island School, as a New
4 York City Landmark, the fourth such designation in
5 this historic community. The building, located at
6 190 Fordham Street, has been a staple of City
7 Island for over a century and served as City
8 Island's only school until it was replaced by PS
9 175 in 1975. Today the building remains
10 significant to City Island, serving as the City
11 Island Nautical Museum for the last 30 years.
12 Currently the museum is expanding its exhibits and
13 preserves over 100 years of City Island history,
14 it is one of the most distinguished locations
15 throughout the Bronx, and I commend those who have
16 kept it intact over the years. I'd like to thank
17 the Planning Commission, the LPC and the Committee
18 and the Council's Land Use staff for their
19 attention to this historic location in my
20 district. Sincerely, James Vacca, Council Member,
21 13th District in the Bronx." Any questions from
22 any members of the Committee? All right, thank
23 you very much, we'll move on to the next item,
24 which is Land Use #5 ... the public hearing on this
25 item is closed, and we'll move to Land Use #573,

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2 the Hotel Walcott at 4 West 31st Street in Speaker
3 Quinn's district.

4 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
5 Lander and members of the Committee, my name Jenny
6 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental &
7 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
8 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the
9 Commission's designation of the Hotel Walcott in
10 Manhattan. On October 26th, 2010, the Landmarks
11 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
12 the proposed designation as a landmark of the
13 Hotel Wolcott, located at 4 West 31st Street.
14 There were three speakers in favor of designation,
15 including a representative of Assemblyman
16 Gottfried and representatives of the Historic
17 Districts Council and the Metropolitan Chapter of
18 the Victorian Society of America. There were no
19 speakers in opposition. The owner is supportive
20 of designation. On December 20th, 2011, the
21 Commission voted to designate the building a New
22 York City Individual Landmark. The Beaux Arts
23 style Hotel Wolcott is a distinctive early 20th
24 century hotel in midtown Manhattan. Designed by
25 prominent architect John H. Duncan, the hotel

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2 served as a meeting place for many important
3 political events, such as Mayor Fiorello
4 LaGuardia's inaugural ball, and was a long-term
5 residence of well-known people such as Isadora
6 Duncan and Doris Duke. The hotel was typical of
7 the midtown hotels of the period in the variety
8 and quality of its accommodations, but stood out
9 for its distinctive classical French Beaux Arts
10 style consisting of over-scaled keystones,
11 brackets and cartouches. John H. Duncan is best
12 known for his design for the General Ulysses S.
13 Grant National Memorial, as well as the Soldiers'
14 and Sailors' Memorial Arch in the Grand Army Plaza
15 in Brooklyn. Mr. Duncan created a unique
16 classical design in the exuberance of the period.
17 The Hotel Wolcott still functions as a hotel, its
18 original design purpose when built more than 100
19 years ago. The Commission urges you to affirm
20 this designation.

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
22 much, Ms. Fernandez. I was just looking up, I
23 noticed that when it was built, it was leased to a
24 well-known New York hotelier named James Breslin,
25 so I was trying to figure out was he Jimmy

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2 Breslin's father or grandfather, but I can't tell,
3 so.

4 MS. FERNANDEZ: I can ask for you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Well. Does
6 the Committee have any questions about the Hotel
7 Wolcott on West 31st Street? All right, glad to
8 hear that the owner is supportive. As you know,
9 those are our favorites here. We don't have
10 anyone signed up to testify, so if there's someone
11 here who would like to, please speak up now. If
12 not, we will close the hearing on this item and
13 move on to our third item, Land Use #574, the
14 Mutual Reserve Building at 305 Broadway in
15 Committee Member Chin's district.

16 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
17 Lander. Again for the record, my name is Jenny
18 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental &
19 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
20 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the
21 Commission's designation of the Mutual Reserve
22 Building in Manhattan. On June 22nd, 2010, the
23 Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
24 hearing on the proposed designation as a landmark
25 of the Mutual Reserve Building. One person, a

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2 representative of the Historic Districts Council,
3 spoke in favor of designation. The owners chose
4 not to attend the public hearing and have not
5 stated opposition to designation. On December
6 20th, 2011, the Commission voted to designate the
7 building a New York City Individual Landmark. The
8 13-story Mutual Reserve Building, located on the
9 northwest corner of Broadway and Duane Street, is
10 one of New York City's most significant examples
11 of a tall late-19th century office building
12 designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque Revival
13 style. The two designed facades feature and
14 granite and limestone cladding, rusticated piers,
15 foliate carving, an arcaded base and upper
16 sections. The architect, William H. Hume, is best
17 known for commercial and institutional work, and
18 this is his most important extant commission. The
19 building is notable as an early steel cage-framed
20 structure in New York, constructed just prior to
21 the full development of the skyscraper. The
22 builder was Richard Deeves, and the consulting
23 structural engineer was Frederick H. Kindl, chief
24 engineer of Carnegie Steel Corporation. The
25 initial principal tenant of the building was the

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2 Mutual Reserve Fund Life Association, launched in
3 1881 with the intention of offering life insurance
4 at cost, but only lasted until 1909. The building
5 has housed numerous tenants and was the first
6 long-term home of the New York City Landmarks
7 Preservation Commission, 1967 through 1980. The
8 Mutual Reserve Building is also significant as a
9 survivor among the 19th century insurance industry
10 buildings along Broadway in this vicinity, which
11 include the Home Life Insurance Company Building
12 and New York Life Insurance Company Building. The
13 Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
15 much, it's nice to see that this was ... that we're
16 landmarking the first long-term home of the
17 Landmarks Commission. Nothing like one of your
18 old homes.

19 MS. FERNANDEZ: Just for the
20 record, I wasn't there.

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: You weren't
22 even born. All right, so I guess it's good when
23 the LPC doesn't show favoritism, otherwise it
24 would have landmarked this building a long time
25 ago, while they were still in it. All right, any

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2 questions about the Mutual Reserve Building? No?
3 All right, seeing none, we have no one signed up
4 to testify, so we'll close the public hearing on
5 this item and we're going to go for a record speed
6 of five items on the Committee calendar today. So
7 we'll move to the fourth, Land Use #575, R.H. Macy
8 & Company Store, the 14th Street Annex at 56 West
9 14th Street, again in Speaker Quinn's district.

10 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
11 Lander, members of the Committee. My name is
12 Jenny Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental &
13 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
14 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the
15 Commission's designation of the R.H. Macy & Co.
16 Store, 14th Street Annex in Manhattan. On July
17 12th, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission
18 held a public hearing on the proposed designation
19 as a landmark of the R.H. Macy & Co. Building
20 Store, the 14th Street Annex. Four people spoke in
21 favor of designation, including representatives of
22 Manhattan Community Board #2, Greenwich Village
23 Society for Historic Preservation and Historic
24 Districts Council. The owner has not stated
25 opposition to designation. On December 20th, 2011,

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2 the Commission voted to designate the building a
3 New York City Individual Landmark. Located near
4 the intersection of 14th Street and Sixth Avenue in
5 New York City's Ladies' Mile, the R.H. Macy & Co.
6 Store, 14th Street Annex was the last phase in the
7 expansion of the Macy's complex, including older
8 remodeled structures and several purpose-built
9 annexes, occupied by the famous department store
10 during its 44-year tenure at this location.

11 Founded in 1858 by Rowland H. Macy as a fancy-
12 goods store, Macy's became known for innovative
13 retailing strategies, and emerged as a full-
14 service department store, one of the city's
15 largest. At nine stories tall and a slender 25
16 feet wide, the front façade of the 14th Street
17 Annex is designed in exuberant Beaux Arts style
18 and arranged in a tripartite base-shaft-capital
19 composition. After Macy's move to Herald Square
20 in 1902, the 14th Street Annex was occupied during
21 1904 through 1914 by the new 14th Street Store on
22 Sixth Avenue operated by Henry Siegel. The former
23 14th Street Annex, Macy's 14th Street Annex, owned
24 by the Straus family until 1939, and internally
25 connected to the 13th Street Annex through the 20th

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2 century, housed a variety of firms over subsequent
3 decades. The distinctive façade of Macy's 14th
4 Street Annex is a reminder of one of the city's
5 most prominent stores in its original location,
6 and of Ladies' Mile's heyday as the city's central
7 retail shopping district in the second half of the
8 19th century. The Commission urges you to affirm
9 this designation.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
11 much, Ms. Fernandez, and we'll call people's
12 attention to page 11 of the Committee report if
13 you'd like, a drawing of what the full Macy's
14 store looked like when it was on this location on
15 Sixth Avenue and stretched around the corner on
16 13th and 14th Streets. Any questions? Okay, no one
17 is signed up to testify, so we'll close the public
18 hearing on this item as well, and move on to the
19 final item on today's Subcommittee calendar, which
20 is Land Use #576, the Daniel and Abbie B. Eldridge
21 House at 87-61 111th Street in Committee Member
22 Wills' district in Queens.

23 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
24 Lander. My name is Jenny Fernandez, Director of
25 Intergovernmental & Community Relations for the

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2 Landmarks Preservation Commission, I'm here today
3 to testify on the Commission's designation of the
4 Daniel and Abbie B. Eldridge House in Queens. On
5 June 28th, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation
6 Commission held a public hearing on the proposed
7 designation as a landmark of the Daniel and Abbie
8 B. Eldridge House. Three people testified in
9 favor of designation, including representatives of
10 the Historic Districts Council, the Victorian
11 Society of New York, and the Queens Preservation
12 Council. A motion was approved to leave the
13 record open for 30 days, but no further comments
14 were received. The Commission received a letter
15 of support from the owner of the property. On
16 December 20th, 2011, the Commission voted to
17 designate the building a New York City Individual
18 Landmark. Little development had taken place in
19 Jamaica, Queens, or Clarenceville, as the area was
20 named, when Daniel Eldridge, a clerk in New York
21 City's Water Department, an alleged member of the
22 Tweed Ring, purchased six lots in 1867 and 1869.
23 His imposing circa 1870 2½ story Italianate-style
24 villa, with its cubic form, hipped roof and
25 projecting eaves, square cupola, segmental-arched

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2 entrance and elaborate doorhood, and angular bay
3 windows may have been influenced by the cottage
4 and villa designs popularized in the mid-19th
5 century by the pattern books of Andrew Jackson
6 Downing and Henry W. Cleaveland. Clarenceville,
7 which was incorporated into Richmond Hill in 1895,
8 remained largely undeveloped until the turn of the
9 20th century. The Daniel and Abbie B. Eldridge
10 House, now enlarged and repurposed as a school,
11 remains a rare relatively-intact example of the
12 Italianate-style villa in Queens. Standing in
13 contrast to the small single- and multi-family
14 dwellings that were constructed during the 20th
15 century, it is a unique and important reminder of
16 the area's mid-19th century development. The
17 Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
19 much, I'm not sure how to ... the building is lovely
20 and well worth preservation, I'm not sure how we
21 feel about preserving the Tweed Ring goodies, I
22 guess it's for another day, but the building is
23 certainly lovely. Any questions from my
24 colleagues on this one? All right, then we will
25 close the public hearing on this item, and that

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concludes our hearings of the five items on today's Committee calendar. So we will ask our Committee counsel, Christian Hylton, to call the roll, the Chair recommends a vote of aye.

MR. HYLTON: Chair Lander.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Aye on all.

MR. HYLTON: Committee Member

Palma.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

MR. HYLTON: Committee Member

Arroyo.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

MR. HYLTON: Committee Member

Mendez.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

MR. HYLTON: Committee Member

Williams.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Aye.

MR. HYLTON: Committee Member

Halloran.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN III: May I

be excused to explain my vote?

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN III: Mr.

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2 Chairman, I think all of these properties are very
3 deserving and I'm very glad that there's a
4 majority here that will be able to vote to give
5 them designation. For reasons that I'm not quite
6 clear on, I was informed by the Chair that at the
7 budget hearings the Landmarks Preservation
8 Commission informed the Chair that they had
9 rejected consideration of the Broadway-Flushing
10 Historic District in any part, and that has never
11 been communicated to me. In fact, the last
12 conversations we've had was that we were waiting
13 to hear if it could be done. So of course I was
14 shocked to hear indirectly that a decision had
15 been made in my Council district and nobody
16 bothered to tell me. So in addition to the angst
17 that I have over the fact that they will not
18 consider something that's already on the state and
19 national register, I'm now informed that this
20 Committee got to know before I did that the
21 Landmarks Preservation Commission had made a
22 decision in regards to my district, and not let me
23 know. You know, I've worked very hard with the
24 Commission to try to move this along, and I just
25 celebrated the renaming of the Douglaston streets

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2 to their original names, to show the commitment to
3 historic districting that I had for my district.
4 We restored the actual street names by a vote of
5 the Council this week, I was thrilled to do, which
6 overlaps the Douglaston Historic District, so they
7 can enjoy having their traditional street names
8 instead of the grid names of the City of New York,
9 and I just wish someone would have told me. It's
10 a shame that I heard about it from the Chair, and
11 that's very disappointing, and I would hope that
12 perhaps the city could ... the Mayor's Office could
13 make sure that in the future I don't find out
14 about it from hearings, that I find out about
15 what's going to happen in my district from the
16 people who should tell me in my district. Thank
17 you. I vote no.

18 MR. HYLTON: By a vote of five in
19 the affirmative and one in the negative, LU 572,
20 573, 574, 575 and 576 are approved and referred to
21 the full Land Use Committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
23 much, we'll leave the roll open for a few minutes,
24 Committee Member Sanders, I believe, is on his
25 way, so we'll give him another ten minutes or till

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2 the next hearing starts. I just want to say,
3 Committee Member Halloran, I also was ... there is
4 no next hearing, so ten minutes. You know, I
5 asked on your behalf, and it had been my
6 understanding that there was still, and I also
7 hadn't heard that there had been a decision to
8 reject, but to consider the possibility of a small
9 piece of the district at least to get started. So
10 hopefully a clearer dialogue can take place.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN III: I
12 appreciate that, and I appreciate you asking at
13 the hearings, and again, I know Ms. Fernandez has
14 done such a great job on all of these buildings,
15 and has done so much to help preserve the
16 character of the City of New York in its unique
17 historic districts, I'm just sad and disappointed.

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: With that ... so
19 you've announced the vote? I think you already
20 did. Okay. Thank you, sorry. Yeah, we'll hold
21 the vote open for ten minutes for other Committee
22 Members, and with that we'll adjourn the
23 Subcommittee meeting.

24 MR. HYLTON: Committee Member
25 Sanders.

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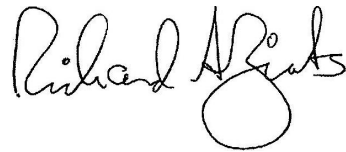
COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS, JR.: I
vote aye.

MR. HYLTON: Final vote of the
Subcommittee on Landmarks, six in the affirmative,
one in the negative, no abstentions.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS, JR.: By
the powers vested in me, this meeting is now
adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Richard A. Ziats, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature _____

Date March 28, 2012