

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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August 27, 2024
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HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY, COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Oswald Feliz
Christopher Marte
Yusef Salaam

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Melissa Auton, Director of Manhattan Planning at
New York City Housing Preservation and
Development

Peter Procida, Procida Development

Tariq Shahid, Malcolm Shabazz Development
Corporation

Timothy Frye, Director of Special Projects and
Strategic Planning at the New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Lisa Kersavage, Executive Director at the New
York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

3

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and
3 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for
4 the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and
5 Dispositions.

6 At this time, we ask that you silence all
7 electronic devices, and at no time is anyone to
8 approach the dais.

9 If you have any questions during the
10 hearing, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms.

11 Chair, we're ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
13 everyone. Welcome to the meeting of Subcommittee on
14 Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions. I am
15 Council Member Kamillah Hanks, and I am Chair of the
16 Subcommittee. Today I am joined by my Colleague,
17 Council Member Salaam.

18 Before we begin today's agenda, I will
19 remind everyone that this meeting is being held in a
20 hybrid format. For members of the public who wish to
21 testify remotely, we ask that you first register
22 online, and you may do so now by visiting
23 www.council.nyc.gov/land use to sign up and then sign
24 into the Zoom and remain signed on until you have
25 testified.

1
2 For anyone with us today in person who
3 wish to testify, if you have not already done so,
4 please see one of our Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a
5 speaker's card, and we will call your name at the
6 appropriate time.

7 For anyone wishing to submit written
8 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that
9 you please send it via email to
10 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Include the land
11 use number and/or the project name in the subject
12 line of your email. Video and audio testimony will
13 not be accepted.

14 I will remind members of the public that
15 this is a government proceeding and that decorum
16 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of
17 the public shall remain silent unless and until
18 called to testify.

19 The witness table is reserved for people
20 who wish to testify. No video recording or
21 photography is allowed from the witness table.
22 Further, members of the public may not present audio
23 or video recordings as testimony but may submit
24 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant for
25 inclusion on the hearing record.

1
2 On today's agenda, we have Malcolm
3 Shabazz Harlem Plaza, a pre-considered application by
4 the New York City Department of Housing Preservation
5 and Development in support of a development in
6 Council Member Salaam's District in Manhattan; LU
7 number 129, the Landmarks Preservation Commission's
8 proposed designation of the Temple Court, now Beekman
9 Hotel Atrium in Council Member Marte's District in
10 Manhattan as a historic landmark; Land Use number 108
11 in Landmarks Preservation Commission's proposed
12 designation of the Heckscher Building, now the Crown
13 Building, in Council Member Power's District in
14 Manhattan and historic landmark; and Land Use 131,
15 the Landmarks Preservation Commission's proposed
16 designation of Frederick Douglass Memorial Park in
17 Council Member Carr's District in Staten Island as a
18 historic landmark.

19 Now I will open the public hearing for a
20 pre-considered Land Use item for an application by
21 the New York City Department of Preservation and
22 Development seeking designation of an urban
23 development action area, approval of an urban
24 development action area project, and the disposition
25

of several City-owned lots in Central Harlem known as
the Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Plaza.

Approval of the proposed actions will
facilitate the construction of two new nine-story
mixed-use towers containing affordable housing units
through HPD Extremely Low and Low-income
Affordability program, ELLA, and the new community
facility space intended for the existing incubator
African Vendors Market.

Appearing today on this proposal is
Melissa Auton for HPD, Peter Procida from Procida
Development, Tyreke Shaheed from Malcolm Shabazz
Development Corporation, and is that it? Yes.

Those who wish to testify remotely again
must register online by visiting the Council's
website at [council.nyc.gov/land use](http://council.nyc.gov/land-use).

Counsel, would you please administer the
affirmation?

Before you begin, I just wanted to
recognize Council Member Marte has joined us as well.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Panelists
would you please raise your right hand and state your
name for the record?

MELISSA AUTON: Melissa Auton.

1
2 PETER PROCIDA: Peter Procida.

3 TARIQ SHAHID: Tariq Shahid.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to
5 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
6 truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and
7 in answer to all Council Member questions?

8 MELISSA AUTON: I do.

9 PETER PROCIDA: I do.

10 TARIQ SHAHID: I do.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. You may
12 begin.

13 MELISSA AUTON: Great. Thank you. I
14 believe there's a presentation. All right. Thank you.

15 Good morning, Chair Hanks and Council
16 Members. I am Melissa Auton, Director of Manhattan
17 Planning at HPD, and I am excited to be here
18 presenting to you the Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Plaza
19 project, an affordable housing project that will
20 result in the construction of a new nine-story
21 building containing approximately 109 affordable
22 housing units. The proposed development will also
23 include ground floor community facility space for a
24 new and improved Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market. I am
25 joined here today by my HPD colleagues and our

development partners who will introduce themselves in
the presentation or during the Q and A as needed.

Next slide please. Thank you.

As part of the ULURP application, which
started with the certification of this project on
April 15, 2024, we are excited to be here today
presenting the Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Plaza
application, which will bring much needed affordable
housing and improved ground floor community facility
space to the Harlem neighborhood. The Malcolm Shabazz
Harlem Plaza project is located at 52 West 116th
Street on four City-owned lots located on Block 1599
in Manhattan Community Board 10. Next slide please.

To facilitate the project, HPD is
proposing the following Land Use action, a UDAAP
designation and UDAAP approval and the disposition of
the development site. Next slide.

So here is an overhead view for more
context of the location and, at this time, I will
turn the presentation over to Peter Procida, a
representative of the development team who will
provide further details on the proposed project.

PETER PROCIDA: Hello, Council Members. My
name is Peter Procida. I'm with Procida Construction

1 and Procida Development Group. Procida is a fourth-
2 generation family-owned business that's been located
3 in the Bronx since the mid-1970s, focused on the
4 creation of affordable housing all across the city.
5 We're here with our partners at Malcolm Shabazz
6 Development Corp. We've been working on this site in
7 conjunction with HPD since about 2016, and we're
8 excited to bring this before you here today.

9
10 As you can see in the slide above, the
11 Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market occupies the site in
12 question and is located between Malcolm X and 5th and
13 is a through-block site between 115th and 116th. Next
14 slide please.

15 Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Plaza is a one-
16 building, two-tower, nine-story development which is
17 100 percent affordable housing under the HPD ELLA
18 program which will provide 108 affordable units, one
19 unit for a live-in super, and will have a shared
20 second story terrace for the outdoor recreation of
21 the residents. Each building will include its own
22 bike room, laundry room, and community room, and
23 distinct lobbies on 115th and/or 116th. The
24 cornerstone of this development is the refresh of the
25 Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market. All of the vendors

1 will be temporarily relocated when we start
2 construction and they will be brought back once
3 construction is complete, and I will note that this
4 is a very environmentally and sustainable project
5 which has been awarded a Building of Excellence Award
6 from NYSERDA as of a few months ago. Next slide,
7 please.
8

9 Here you can see the site plan where you
10 see the two towers which are approximately equal in
11 size and the shared second-story terrace which is for
12 the use of the residents only. Next slide, please.

13 Here's our proposed breakdown of AMIs. I
14 will point out that we are exceeding HPD minimums of
15 two- and three-bedrooms as we believe it is important
16 to target family-sized units when we're developing
17 housing across the city. The AMIs range from formerly
18 homeless households up to 80 percent and are split as
19 you can see on this slide. Next slide, please.

20 As you guys are all well aware, City of
21 Yes is pending. If and when City of Yes comes through
22 and passes, we will be adding a 10th floor to each
23 tower. That will result in a total of 123 units which
24 is a 14-unit increase. The splits based on AMI and
25

1 unit sizing are approximately the same and are shown
2 on this slide. Next slide, please.

3
4 As I mentioned earlier, the refresh of
5 the Harlem market is the key to this site. The
6 incubator program has been up and running since 1994.
7 Tariq has been running that program since its
8 inception. At the time of its inception, there were
9 over 1,000 vendors on 125th street and MSDC worked
10 with the Giuliani Administration to bring those
11 vendors onto a private site and alleviate the issue
12 that was occurring between the vendors and the brick-
13 and-mortar retailers and, since its inception, the
14 program has been nothing but a success, launching
15 over 40 brick-and-mortar businesses into the
16 community and across the city. Next slide, please.

17 The existing market is a cultural and
18 economic staple that specializes in colorful and
19 international items. Currently, there are 57 booths
20 which are occupied by 47 vendors. The vendors are
21 subject to outdoor conditions and sales slump during
22 the winter. By bringing the market indoors, we feel
23 that it will increase the year-round viability for
24 the vendors and help their businesses stand on
25 stronger footing as we move forward. The

1
2 rehabilitated market will have 60 stalls which will
3 include the 48 stalls for the dry good vendors as
4 well as some stalls for food vendors so that the
5 incubator program can be expanded to food-based
6 entrepreneurs who are looking to start their
7 business. We also believe that the food-based
8 businesses will help increase length of stay at the
9 market and hopefully help boost sales for the
10 vendors. Next slide, please.

11 Here is an artistic rendering of what we
12 think the finished product will look like, and we'll
13 open it up for any questions from the Council
14 Members. Tariq is just here for questions.

15 TARIQ SHAHID: Yeah, I'm just here to
16 answer any questions regarding (INAUDIBLE).

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, thank you.

18 TARIQ SHAHID: I mean, I can make a great
19 presentation but I just want to answer questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Oh, no problem. I just
21 wanted to give you that opportunity before I decided
22 to.

23 Thank you so much for coming. I do have a
24 few questions and then we'll be followed by Council
25 Member Salaam who will have some questions. Can you

1 please explain the resiliency measures,
2 environmentally friendly components embedded in this
3 building design and site plan? Can you expand on that
4 a little bit?
5

6 PETER PROCIDA: The building is designed
7 to passive house standards. It will include solar
8 power on both of the roofs. We're doing some
9 rainwater harvesting in conjunction with DEP and
10 adhering to the SWMP to alleviate impacts to the
11 stormwater systems in the street, and we are using
12 high efficiency PTHPs for heating and cooling of the
13 units as well as all electric throughout other than
14 an emergency generator which will be gas fired.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Just for the record,
16 PTH... acronyms. We have a lot.

17 PETER PROCIDA: I know, I know. Packaged,
18 P, terminal heat pump.

19 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Got it. Thank you. So,
20 in terms of the site plan and design, how does the
21 residential space interact with the new vendor plaza?
22 And likewise, what is the separation between these
23 two spaces?

24 PETER PROCIDA: Yeah, for lack of a better
25 term, we have separated church and state. The lobbies

1 on 115th and 116th are independent of one another,
2 and the residents will have access to their building
3 or their tower and not to one another's tower to
4 focus in on the community so that you have 50
5 neighbors instead of 100 neighbors who are the people
6 that you're dealing with. The market will have its
7 own separate and distinct entry. There is no shared
8 space in between the residential. There are shared
9 utility rooms and stuff, but that is only for
10 building management and the residents will not have
11 access to those.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you for your
14 clarity. Now, I'd like to recognize Council Member
15 Salaam, who will also have questions. Council Member.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Thank you.
17 Definitely appreciate the presentation, and I'm
18 inspired by the opportunity to have something really
19 nice presented in that space.

20 The community is excited about the fact
21 that this project will create more opportunity for
22 local vendors in addition to the existing plaza
23 vendors utilizing the site. Some members have raised
24 concern, however, about increased price for the
25 vendors to participate. Can you please speak to the

1 pricing for the vendors to utilize this space and how
2 open spaces will be advertised going forward?

3
4 TARIQ SHAHID: Yeah. First of all, it's
5 important to understand with regard to the increase.
6 First of all, there's only been two increases for the
7 entire 30 years that I've been managing the building,
8 and I think people make 20 dollars a day at present
9 for their spaces right now. So, of course, we're
10 going to have a new space, new everything, and so, of
11 course, there has to be some increase. However, when
12 you're talking 20 dollars a day for a business, if
13 you're in business and you're not doing more than 20
14 dollars a day, then maybe you should consider another
15 business, in my opinion, but here's what happened.
16 We've kept this to a very nominal theme and we've
17 been able to run this market, and a lot of it based
18 on the fact that we had a lot of tourism, a lot of
19 people coming in. We're excited also about the future
20 because now, remember, we lose about five, six months
21 just based on wintertime, and we're members of the
22 New York City tourism. We've been members for the
23 last 20, 25 years, and so annually, every year, they
24 sponsor a big program where they bring in people who
25 are part of the tourism companies all over the world,

1 and we get a chance to meet with them and promote our
2 market to them, let them know. So, usually, they
3 don't come during the wintertime. Now that we will be
4 enclosed, they'll be able to come, so we'll be able
5 to have far many more people coming to the market,
6 and we've done a great job in the summertime.
7
8 However, when the wintertime comes, one of the things
9 I always tease is when people ask, can I get a space
10 in the market? I always say, not in the summertime.
11 No one ever moves in the summertime. We've never had
12 anybody leave the market in the summertime so the
13 fees that we're offering, remember, these are
14 membership fees. This is an incubator program, the
15 brainchild of our Imam, Imam Pasha. The idea was to
16 go from dust, that which is unformed, to industry,
17 and we've been able to do that in a very small way.
18 Certainly, we think it's great, because we measure
19 greatness not from where we are, but from how far
20 we've come, and we know we have a long way to go, but
21 we have, they said, 40 businesses. I know at least 75
22 of them. I know many of them moved to the Bronx, who
23 got their start in the market, and we started this
24 market, and we used to be 6 dollars a day, and we
25 raised it to 20 dollars so we know that we've been

1
2 very fair. Our concern has always been the market
3 itself. That's who we are. The Malcolm Shabazz Harlem
4 Market has been who we are, and we look forward to
5 that. We don't think the increase will affect them in
6 their businesses much. As you know, any vendor,
7 anybody in business, when you say there's an
8 increase, they say, oh, no, but we're sensitive to
9 their needs and the fact that the people are in the
10 community, and this is the way they make their
11 living, so we'll be very sensitive to that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Gotcha. Gotcha.
13 Would the vendors have leases, and how does the
14 incubator program operate?

15 TARIQ SHAHID: Okay, good. I'm so glad you
16 asked that question. No, they will not have leases.
17 We don't deal in leases. I'll tell you why. Number
18 one, this is an incubator program, and they have a
19 membership, and this membership is pursuant, they
20 have what we call a fee agreement, just as if you go
21 to the Y, just as if you go to a hotel. You go to a
22 hotel, you check in. If you don't pay your bill, they
23 lock the door. We do the same thing. This way, we
24 avoid going back and forth to court in a situation
25 where we're still covering expenses and people are

1 not paying their fee, and it's an incubator program.
2 Our design is to help people get to the point where
3 they can be independent and move out on their own to
4 be in business. That's the ultimate objective so, no,
5 we'll do the same thing we have. We have fee
6 agreements, and they're weekly fee agreements, and
7 you pay for seven days. For example, if you're paying
8 140 dollars for a week, then at the end of the week,
9 if you pay your rent, if you don't pay your fee,
10 then, of course, we lock the door. And just so you
11 know this, we have never had anybody put out because
12 they couldn't pay their rent, ever. We've only had
13 two people taken out of the market in 30 years, and
14 that was for fighting, which we don't allow. And only
15 two people in 30 years have been put out of the
16 market. We've had people leave, not pay their rent.
17 They come back. We take them back. This is our
18 community. We're trying to build, trying to develop
19 people. We know that some people come and they have
20 products they won't sell, so what do we do? We tell
21 them, okay, why don't you change products, but the
22 market started off in a grand way by, this brainchild
23 of Iman Pasha is great. Number one, we used to give
24 English as a second language. We would give inventory
25

1 classes, tax, how you do your taxes, how to prepare,
2 how to market your business, how to sell in our
3 market so it's been an amazing situation so we feel
4 really confident in terms of the market and its new
5 development and, not a new location, but a new spirit
6 in that location.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I'm assuming that
9 because of the previous, as this is going forward,
10 the previous iteration will be open space. The new
11 one is going to be closed..

12 TARIQ SHAHID: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Space and so forth
14 and so on. Are the individual participants
15 responsible for maintaining their space, the
16 cleanliness and all of that stuff?

17 TARIQ SHAHID: Well, yeah, individually
18 but, of course, we have maintenance. At the market
19 right now, we have four maintenance shifts at this
20 point. We have from 8 to 4, we have from 4 to 8, we
21 have from 8 to 12, and we have from 12 to 8. The
22 market is being maintained all day, all time. Because
23 you remember, we get so many people, people that have
24 garbage, you have things you have to throw out then
25 we have people for unexpected spills, things that

1
2 happen that you don't foresee, but we don't see a
3 problem. Everybody's supposed to take care of their
4 own little space but, outside of that, then we'll be
5 taking care of the market.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Gotcha. Just a few
7 more. You mentioned that the passing of the City of
8 Yes Zoning for Housing Opportunity would affect this
9 project by allowing another story to the two-tower
10 building. Does your team have a projected unit mix
11 for this additional potential floor?

12 PETER PROCIDA: Yes, that is on, what
13 slide is this?

14 MELISSA AUTON: Yeah, it's in the
15 presentation.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: And as you look
17 for that, too, I just wanted to know as well, will
18 the approval or the disapproval of the City of Yes
19 Zoning for Housing Opportunity affect this project's
20 timeline and financial planning in any significant
21 manner?

22 TARIQ SHAHID: Good question.

23 PETER PROCIDA: At the moment, we are
24 working through HPD's pipeline. We do not know if and
25 when, or we know we will close, but we don't know

1 when. That's a question that HPD will have to answer.
2 We are still in the approval stage as it relates to
3 DOB. We anticipate filing our plans towards the end
4 of this year, and we're preparing to do that and,
5 assuming that City of Yes passes in October,
6 November, which has kind of been the timeline that
7 we've heard, it will not impact our approvals
8 timeline. How it relates to the closing is a question
9 that HPD would have to answer. And then those are the
10 that's the impact based on City of Yes so the current
11 proposal is 109 units and, if City of Yes passes, we
12 bump up to 123 so the percentages of Studios, ones,
13 twos, and threes remain proportionally the same, and
14 the AMI mix would also remain proportionally the
15 same.
16

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I guess the final
18 question in terms of these folks that are there being
19 able to kind of, I guess, still participate in
20 business. During the time of construction, where do
21 you plan to move the vendors who are currently
22 running their businesses on these sites? Do you have
23 any monetary incentives to provide them to
24 temporarily relocate their businesses? And if so,
25

1 have you incorporated these costs into your
2 construction estimates?

3
4 PETER PROCIDA: Yes, so the cost to
5 relocate both away from and back to the market are
6 incorporated into our budget. The bulk of the vendors
7 are going to relocate to a vacant site. It's, I
8 think, three lots to the west of this current site so
9 it's on the same block. There's about 11 or 12
10 vendors that we will need to relocate to a
11 storefront. We are, again, working on the timing of
12 when we're going to close. Right now, there's, last I
13 counted, which was a couple weeks ago, five or six
14 vacant storefronts on that block that we intend to
15 reach out to the landlords and try and secure a
16 short-term lease but, until we're a little clearer
17 from HPD as to when we're going to close, it doesn't
18 make sense for us to engage with a private landlord
19 and secure that space and start paying rent if we're
20 not going to close for 6, 12 months or whatever that
21 might be but, again, the cost to build out both the
22 temporary outdoor market and the temporary retail
23 space, moving costs for the vendors both to and from
24 the site are included within our budget.

1
2 TARIQ SHAHID: Councilman, it's also
3 important to know that there's 36 vendors and 11
4 tailors, so there's 36 regular vendors, dry goods
5 vendors, and 11 tailors. Those tailors, the space is
6 so small, that's why we're looking to put them in
7 another location. Their business is not based on
8 traffic that comes from out of the country or out of
9 the state. They're home-based. The people in the
10 neighborhood know them. They get their things made,
11 tailor-made from them, so it doesn't affect them to
12 the degree that would affect the people who are
13 essentially dry goods.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: Understood.
15 Thanks.

16 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.
17 Thank you. The applicant panel is now excused.

18 PETER PROCIDA: Thank you.

19 TARIQ SHAHID: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Counsel, are there any
21 members of the public who wish to testify on this
22 item?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nobody here would like
24 to testify, is that correct?

1
2 Chair, there are no members of the public
3 who wish to testify.

4 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay, thank you. Being
5 that there are no other members of the public who
6 wish to testify regarding the Preconsidered LUs
7 Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Plaza, the hearing is now
8 closed.

9 Now, I'll open the public hearing for
10 Land Use 129, the proposed designation by the
11 Landmarks Preservation Commission of the Temple
12 Court, now Beekman Hotel Atrium, in Council Member
13 Powers' District in Manhattan as a historic landmark.

14 Appearing today on this proposal is
15 Timothy Frye, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and
16 Lisa Kersavage, Landmarks Preservation Commission.

17 Those wishing to testify remotely must
18 register online and visit the Council's website at
19 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

20 Before the Counsel would administer the
21 affirmation, I would like to recognize Council Member
22 Feliz has joined us.

23 Counsel, would you please administer the
24 affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

TIMOTHY FRYE: Timothy Frye.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Lisa Kersavage.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but your truth in the testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions?

TIMOTHY FRYE: I do.

LISA KERSAVAGE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We can begin.

TIMOTHY FRYE: All right. Good morning, Chair Hanks and Members of the Subcommittee. I'm Timothy Frye, Director of Special Projects and Strategic Planning at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and I'm joined by our Executive Director, Lisa Kersavage. Thank you for the opportunity to present three of our recent designations, the Temple Court Building Atrium, which now operates in the Beekman Hotel; the Heckscher Building, now known as the Crown Building; and Frederick Douglass Memorial Park.

1 So we'll start with the Temple Court
2
3 Building Atrium. The Temple Court Building Atrium,
4 next slide, is located in the Beekman Hotel and is a
5 beautiful nine-story interior sky-lit atrium and an
6 early and rare surviving 19th century office building
7 interior. After years of being closed off and
8 inaccessible to the public, it was carefully
9 rehabilitated in 2016, becoming the centerpiece of
10 the Beekman Hotel. The combination of carefully
11 restored historic elements and finely crafted plaster
12 and millwork based on surviving examples have
13 returned this historic space to its former glory.
14 LPC's Designated Interior Landmarks are very special
15 spaces that must be customarily open to the public or
16 accessible to the public, and the Commission has
17 designated only 123 interior landmarks throughout its
18 history. Next slide.

19 The Designated Atrium is a main feature
20 of the previously designated Temple Court Building
21 and Annex, which was designed in two phases between
22 1881 and 1890 by Silliman and Farnsworth, with the
23 later annex designed by just Farnsworth. It is the
24 earliest surviving fireproof tall office building
25

erected in New York City as the city recovered from
the financial panic of 1873. Next slide.

Located at the center of the original
portion of the Temple Court Building, the atrium
includes eight tiers of galleries surrounded by
arched door and window openings, encaustic floor
tiling, decorative brackets, and a cast iron
skylight. The galleries from the third through the
ninth floors are historic and feature ornamental cast
iron balustrades, heavy newel posts, and decorative
brackets. Capping the atrium, a historic skylight
features decorative cutwork and delicate filigree in
the upper and lower monitors. During the 2016
restoration, the second-floor gallery was partially
rebuilt using glass blocks set in concrete to recall
the roofs of the stores that used to occupy the
atrium's ground floor. At the same time, the ground
floor, which is now fully open, was converted to the
hotel's bar and lounge. Next slide.

To preserve the open atrium, an
innovative fire safety system was designed and
implemented specifically for the Beekman Hotel. It
features discrete sprinklers, smoke curtains, and
glass panels, which are integrated into the atrium's

1 historic structure. To safely minimize the spread of
2 smoke, fire-rated curtains drop from each gallery
3 floor from a hidden panel, which you can see here on
4 the image on the right, and the transparent glass
5 panels at the corners help seal the gaps between the
6 curtains. Next slide.

7
8 The designated interior landmark site
9 consists of solely the volume defined by the atrium
10 galleries. From the first floor up to and including
11 the skylight, the galleries, the surrounding walls,
12 the decorative features facing into the atrium, the
13 east and west hallways connecting the atrium to the
14 annex at the second through the eighth floors, and
15 the historic cast iron staircase from the first
16 through the ninth story. Next slide.

17 The Temple Court Building's atrium is a
18 unique surviving 19th century commercial atrium that
19 has been sensitively rehabilitated as an incredible
20 centerpiece of the Beekman Hotel with its historic
21 elements lovingly restored and, where necessary,
22 reproduced to recreate the space's historic ambiance.
23 Thank you for letting us present the Temple Court
24 Building atrium.

Now we'll move on to the Heckscher
Building.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Wait.

TIMOTHY FRYE: Oh, sure.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Sorry. We're going to
take them all separate.

TIMOTHY FRYE: Okay.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Council Member Marte
has questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Yeah. Thank you for
being here. I just wanted to say a quick statement.

I'm excited to support the landmarking of
the atrium of the Temple Court Building in the
Financial District. Now the Beekman Hotel, this
storied structure has been an iconic landmark of
Lower Manhattan for over 140 years. While we already
recognize the historic and architectural significance
of its façade, it's time we honor the building's
beautiful atrium, stretching from the lobby to the
skylight, and restore it through meticulous
craftsmanship and innovative engineering. Many of the
city's most impressive interiors have since been lost
through neglect, damage, or demolition. Because of

1
2 the unwavering commitment of Eric Bass and GFI
3 Development as well as with the help of LPC to the
4 atrium's restoration, and at no small sacrifice on
5 their part, financially or time-wise, we can continue
6 to admire this beautiful and thoughtful work of
7 design for decades to come so I want to thank the
8 team, and my team is fully supportive of it. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Counsel, are there any
11 members of the public who wish to testify on this
12 item?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, there are not,
14 Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: There are no other
16 members of the public who wish to testify on LUs 129
17 for landmarking of Temple Court, now the Beekman
18 Hotel Atrium, the public hearing is now closed. Thank
19 you so much.

20 I will now open the public hearing for
21 Land Use 108, the proposed designation by Landmarks
22 Preservation Commission of the Heckscher Building,
23 now the Crown Building, in Council Member Powers'
24 District in Manhattan, as a historic landmark.

1 Appearing today, who's still here,
2
3 Timothy Frye of Landmarks Preservation Commission and
4 Lisa Kersavage, Landmarks Preservation Commission.

5 Again, those who wish to testify must
6 register online at the Council's website at
7 council.nyc.gov/land use.

8 Counsel, can you please administer the
9 affirmation?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you
11 please raise your right hand and state your name for
12 the record?

13 TIMOTHY FRYE: Timothy Frye.

14 LISA KERSAVAGE: Lisa Kersavage.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell
16 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
17 in your testimony before the Subcommittee and in
18 answer to all Council Member questions?

19 TIMOTHY FRYE: I do.

20 LISA KERSAVAGE: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You may begin.

22 TIMOTHY FRYE: All right. Again, good
23 morning, Chair Hanks. Located at the southwest corner
24 of 5th Avenue and 57th Street, the Heckscher
25 Building, now called the Crown Building at 735th

1 Avenue, is one of 5th Avenue's most visible and
2 striking skyscrapers. Topped by an ornate octagonal
3 tower with a pyramidal roof, the iconic skyscraper
4 was designed by the firm of Warren and Wetmore. At
5 the public hearing on April 9th of this year, three
6 people testified in support of designation, including
7 a representative of one of the owners, as well as the
8 Historic District's Council and the New York
9 Landmarks Conservancy. Manhattan CB5 also sent a
10 letter expressing support. Next slide.

12 The Heckscher Building was commissioned
13 by Anahma Realty Corporation, a syndicate financed by
14 developer, August Heckscher, builder George Backer,
15 and Charles D. Wetmore, a partner in the
16 architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore.
17 Construction began in 1920 and was completed in 1922.
18 Designed in the French Renaissance style, the
19 Heckscher Building was intended to complement
20 surrounding architecture, such as the Vanderbilt
21 Mansion, which originally stood directly across the
22 street. It was one of the first skyscrapers to
23 conform to New York City's 1916 zoning resolution,
24 which required that tall buildings reduce their mass
25 as they rise. With multiple setbacks starting at the

13th floor, its design demonstrates how a leading
Beaux-Arts architecture firm interpreted this new law
and its impact on the emerging 5th Avenue Shopping
District. Next slide.

The building's exterior is faced with
limestone and cream-colored terracotta and displays
notable classical features, such as spiraling
columns, figurative sculptures, and rows of
decorative spandrel panels. As seen on the image on
the right, the pyramidal roof incorporates a large
dormer and bullseye windows on each of its sides as
well as an elaborate multi-story chimney stack and
crown-like finial. Next slide.

Originally intended for stores,
showrooms, and offices, 735th Avenue was one of the
first tall commercial buildings in this section of
Midtown, anticipating the redevelopment of the area
in the 1920s. In 1983, it was renamed the Crown
Building and, at that time, many of the architectural
features were gilded gold and the façades illuminated
through an architectural lighting program. It was
converted to a hotel and residences in 2022, and it
remains a notable landmark dominating this
intersection. Next slide.

1
2 The Heckscher Building tax lot also
3 incorporates an annex on West 56th Street. As seen on
4 this slide, it was not considered part of the
5 proposed designation, which is outlined in red. Next
6 slide.

7 At the public hearing, the owner of the
8 retail spaces supported the designation and noted the
9 need for future flexibility for tenant storefront
10 designs. The designation does note that since its
11 completion in 1922, building owners have made
12 multiple changes to the commercial storefronts, and
13 the current storefront infill is also non-historic.
14 LPC recognizes the history of storefront changes
15 here, and in keeping with the evolving character of
16 the street, and we support flexibility to accommodate
17 these future needs. Next slide.

18 Completed in 1922, the Heckscher
19 Building, now called the Crown Building, is a
20 significant early skyscraper designed by Warren and
21 Wetmore and an important part of the Midtown
22 Manhattan skyline. Thank you, and I'm happy to answer
23 any questions.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. I
25 do have a statement here that I will read on behalf

2 of Council Member Keith Powers, and this is his
3 statement.

4 I am proud to support the historic
5 landmark designation of the Heckscher Building, now
6 the Crown Building. The building was completed in
7 1922 and is one of the earliest surviving skyscrapers
8 that conform to the 1916 Building Zone Resolution.
9 Previous tenants of the building included Universal
10 Pictures, Art Organization, Société Annonimée, I
11 don't know, publisher, French, French, French,
12 Publisher, and the Museum of Modern Art. Renamed the
13 Crown Building in 1982, it currently houses a luxury
14 hotel and residences, and I hope my Colleagues will
15 join me in supporting this designation.

16 If there are any remote public
17 participants who would like to testify that not have
18 already done so, please press the raised hand button
19 now, and if you are here with us in person, you can
20 see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a speaker
21 card.

22 Counsel, is there anyone wishing to
23 testify?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: There being no members of the public who wish to testify on Land Use 80 for the landmarking of the Heckscher Building, now the Crown Building, the public hearing is now closed.

Now, I will open the public hearing for LU 131, proposed designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park in Council Member Carr's District in Staten Island, a historic landmark.

Again, appearing today on this proposal is Timothy Frye, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and Lisa Kersavage, Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Those wishing to testify remotely must register online by visiting the Council's website at [council.nyc.gov/land use](http://council.nyc.gov/landuse).

Counsel, will you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

TIMOTHY FRYE: Timothy Frye.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Lisa Kersavage.

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell
3 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
4 in your testimony before the Subcommittee and in
5 answer to all Council Member questions?

6 TIMOTHY FRYE: I do.

7 LISA KERSAVAGE: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 TIMOTHY FRYE: Good morning, again,
10 Council Member Hanks. Finally, we are presenting to
11 you the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park at 3201
12 Amboy Road. It is the only extant non-sectarian
13 cemetery in New York City that was founded by and for
14 African-Americans at a time when discrimination and
15 segregation excluded them from other cemeteries. At
16 the public hearing on May 21st of this year, the
17 Commission received support for the proposed
18 designation from five speakers, including two board
19 representatives of the owner, Council Member Kamillah
20 Hanks, Chair of this Subcommittee, the New York
21 Landmarks Conservancy, and the Historic Districts
22 Council. No one spoke in opposition, and the
23 commission also received eight letters, including a
24 joint letter signed by the three Council Members from
25

1
2 Staten Island, Chair Hanks, Council Member Carr, and
3 Council Member Borelli. Next slide.

4 The individual landmark is a 14.88-acre
5 lot in the Oakwood Heights neighborhood of Staten
6 Island. It is adjacent to contemporary housing tracts
7 and just north of Ocean View Cemetery. Next slide.

8 The Frederick Douglass Memorial Park was
9 founded by Rodney Dade, a Harlem funeral director,
10 who wanted an alternative to the inequities African-
11 Americans experienced at many cemeteries where
12 visiting families and funeral possessions were often
13 relegated to the side gates, and the deceased were
14 buried in the least desirable plots. He wanted a
15 cemetery for African-Americans offering the same
16 services and facilities to everyone. He enlisted the
17 support of professionals who shared this vision. He
18 partnered with Benjamin Diamond, a successful
19 businessman, and Frederick A. Bunn, an attorney with
20 the nearby Ocean View Cemetery, and the first Board
21 of Directors included prominent Harlem citizens,
22 fellow funeral directors and ministers, including the
23 highly influential Adam Clayton Powell Sr., pastor of
24 the well-known Abyssinian Baptist Church. Next slide.

1
2 Frederick Douglass Memorial Park opened
3 with its first burials on June 10th in 1935, and
4 incorporated the latest engineering and landscape
5 design features in a park-like setting designed with
6 extensive watering and drainage systems and, as a
7 convenience to the Harlem neighborhood, the
8 administrative offices were located on 125th Street.
9 Next slide.

10 Frederick Douglass Memorial Park was
11 designed by New Jersey civil engineer, James Wallace
12 Higgins, with a focus on the beauty and tranquility
13 of the open countryside. Most of the stone markers
14 are laid flat on the ground to highlight this overall
15 park-like setting. From the time of its founding, the
16 park reserved a prominent location for a monument to
17 Frederick Douglass near the entrance. Sculptor Angus
18 McDougall created an eight-foot-tall granite monument
19 that was unveiled by Hortense Jones, president of the
20 cemetery board, and Ruth Whaley, secretary of the
21 City's Board of Estimate, on May 28th, 1961, and that
22 can be seen here on the right hand of this slide.
23 Next slide.

24 In addition to the thousands of everyday
25 people who have been buried in the cemetery, there

1 are several notable celebrities worth mentioning.
2 Jazz singer Mamie Smith, known as the Queen of the
3 Blues and a pioneer who paved the way for others
4 during the Harlem Renaissance; Tommy Ladnier, an
5 accomplished jazz trumpeter during the '20s and '20s
6 who performed locally within Harlem but also toured
7 abroad in Europe; and then Sol White, who's
8 considered one of the founding fathers of black
9 baseball, who also played on white and black teams
10 but also wrote the history of colored baseball in
11 1907. Both Sol White and the outfielder Elias Brown,
12 seen on the far right of this slide, is also buried
13 at the cemetery, and they were both inducted in the
14 Negro Baseball Hall of Fame. Next slide.

16 The cemetery's office building is located
17 along the north edge of the property. It was
18 completed in stages between 1947 and 1961. The tower
19 and two-story section to the left, originally
20 designed for a small chapel and a caretaker's
21 apartment, was completed by James Whitford Jr., a
22 prolific Staten Island architect. Next slide.

23 Despite recent alterations to the office
24 building and a replacement front entrance gate to the
25 park, the landmark retains its original acreage, its

1 overall design, and reflects its founders' original
2 vision. The Frederick Douglass Memorial Park on
3 Staten Island is a historically significant cemetery
4 established for and by African Americans. Since 1935,
5 it has continued to serve the community with the same
6 mission for almost a century.
7

8 Thank you. That concludes my
9 presentation. Happy to answer any questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. I
11 actually do have a statement I would like to read
12 because this is very important to me, and I just want
13 to thank the Landmarks Preservation Commission on the
14 handling of this and how wonderful it is for us in
15 Staten Island to have this landmarked.

16 As the Chair of Landmarks and Public
17 Sightings and Disposition Committee, I'm filled with
18 a sense of pride and history today as we consider
19 designating Frederick Douglass Memorial Park as a New
20 York City landmark. Frederick Douglass Memorial Park
21 is more than just a cemetery. It is a profound
22 testament to the enduring spirit and its historical
23 significance of New York City's African American
24 community. Founded in 1933 by Rodney Dade, Harlem
25 funeral director, alongside partners Benjamin Diamond

1
2 and Frederick A. Bunn, the park was created to offer
3 a dignified, final resting place for African
4 Americans free from the discrimination prevalent in
5 other cemeteries. Over the decades, this 14-acre
6 memorial park has become the eternal home for many
7 prominent African Americans, including jazz and blues
8 singer Mamie Smith, jazz trumpeter Tommy Ladnier, and
9 the professional baseball player Sol White. This
10 memorial park serves as a reminder of the struggles
11 and achievements African Americans in New York City
12 and provides a sacred space for families to honor
13 their ancestors. As we consider the landmark status
14 for Frederick Douglass Memorial Park, we acknowledge
15 the importance of preserving our city's diverse
16 history and, with this designation, we will not only
17 protect the physical integrity of the park, we will
18 also ensure that future generations will recognize
19 and honor the contributions of African Americans in
20 our city's rich history. A landmark status will
21 provide necessary support and resources to maintain
22 and enhance the park, allowing it to continue as a
23 place of reflection, remembrance, and celebration of
24 African American heritage so I urge my Colleagues to
25 support the Landmark Preservation Commission's

1 designation of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Park
2 as a New York City landmark. This recognition is long
3 overdue and will solidify the park in the city's
4 history.
5

6 Thank you so much.

7 Are there any members of the public
8 wishing to testify on Land Use 131, landmarking of
9 Frederick Douglass Memorial Park?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: With that said, the
12 public hearing is now closed. Thank you so much.

13 That concludes today's business. I would
14 like to thank the members of the public, my
15 Colleagues and Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff,
16 and, of course, the Sergeant-at-Arms for your
17 participation today.

18 This meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank
19 you. [GAVEL]

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25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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 September 14, 2024