

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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September 21, 2015  
Start: 11:18 a.m.  
Recess: 12:30 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
PETER A. KOO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Annabel Palma  
Maria del Carmen Arroyo  
Rosie Mendez  
Stephen T. Levin  
Inez D. Barron  
Ben Kallos  
David G. Greenfield  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Corey D. Johnson

## 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  
Special Projects and Strategic Planning  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Diana Howard  
Community Liaison  
Manhattan Borough President's Office and  
Community Board 7

Andrea Goldwyn  
New York Landmarks Conservancy

Josette Amato  
Executive Director  
West End Preservation Society

Mark Diller  
Member  
Community Board 7

Faith Steinberg  
Resident

Howard Yurall  
Chair  
Friends of Hall of Fame for Great  
Americans

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

Batya Lewton  
President  
Coalition for a Livable West Side

Kate Wood  
Landmark West!

Kelly Carroll  
Historic Districts Council

Michael Gotkin  
Resident

Neil Fazel  
Resident

Lori Malloy  
Resident

Richard Robbins  
Resident

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND  
MARITIME USES

4

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning everyone;  
3 we are about to start.

4 [gavel]

5 Welcome to the Subcommittee on Landmarks,  
6 Public Siting and Maritime Uses; we are joined by  
7 Council Members Arroyo, Mendez, Levin, Kallos and  
8 Council Member Rosenthal.

9 We will be holding public hearings and  
10 voting on three items today. The first item we will  
11 hold a public hearing on LU No. 286, a proposed  
12 designation of the Riverside-West End Historic  
13 District Extension II. This item is located in  
14 Council Member Rosenthal's district. And today we  
15 are joined by, from the LPC... [crosstalk, background  
16 comments] Lauren George, Loraine George from the  
17 Landmarks Commission and Lisa Kersavage, from LPC.  
18 You wanna start your testimony? Please go ahead and  
19 identify yourself and speak, yeah, and start, yeah.

20 LAUREN GEORGE: Hello? Hi. Good  
21 morning, Chair Koo and Council Members. My name is  
22 Lauren George, Director of Intergovernmental and  
23 Community Affairs at the Landmarks Preservation  
24 Commission. I'm here to testify on the designation  
25 of the Riverside-West End Historic District Extension

2 II, and I just began this job last week, so thank you  
3 for having me; bear with me. I also have my  
4 colleague, Lisa Kersavage, Director of Special  
5 Projects and Strategic Planning at Landmarks..  
6 [interpose]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Will... Will you  
8 still come and testify before Gov Ops?

9 LAUREN GEORGE: Yeah, on those [sic]  
10 issues we will, yes.

11 So on October 25th, 2011 the Landmarks  
12 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the  
13 proposed designation of Riverside-West End Historic  
14 District Extension II. The hearing was duly  
15 advertised in accordance with the provision of law  
16 and 27 people spoke in favor of the designation as  
17 proposed, including State Senator Adriano Espaillat,  
18 Assembly Member Danny O'Donnell and representatives  
19 of State Senator Thomas Duane, Assembly Member Linda  
20 Rosenthal, City Council Member Inez Dickens,  
21 Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Manhattan  
22 Community Board 7, the Historic Districts Council,  
23 New York Landmark Conservancy, Arch Nasdor [sic],  
24 Coalition for a Livable West Side, West End  
25 Preservation Society, West 75th Street Block

2 Association, Landmark West! and West Siders for  
3 Responsible Development, as well as other residents  
4 and neighbors.

5 Three people spoke in opposition to the  
6 designation, including the Real Estate Board of New  
7 York, an owner and a neighbor.

8 On June 23rd, 2015, the Landmarks  
9 Preservation Commission unanimously approved the  
10 designation of this 344-building historic district,  
11 bounded roughly by 94th Street to the south and 108th  
12 Street to the north. I have included copies of the  
13 district map for your reference.

14 Designation of this extension was the  
15 culmination of seven years of work by the Landmarks  
16 Preservation Commission to preserve the historic  
17 architecture and character of West End Avenue and  
18 Riverside Drive, as well as the side streets in-  
19 between.

20 The agency worked very closely with  
21 community stakeholders and sought extensive community  
22 input throughout this period. The process was  
23 initiated via meetings in 2010 with the West End  
24 Preservation Society, who sought protection for West  
25 End Avenue. In examining this request, the

3 Commission broadened its inquiry to consider a  
4 significant portion of the properties west of  
5 Broadway, between West 70th and 108th Streets.

6 Because the area was so large, the work was done in  
7 three phases, with two extensions to the Riverside-  
8 West End District and one extension to the West End  
9 Collegiate District. All told, over 1200 buildings  
10 have been designated between West 70th and West 108th  
11 Streets, including all the buildings on West End Av  
12 and practically all the buildings on Riverside.

13           The character and sense of place of this  
14 district is derived from its two spines -- Riverside  
15 Drive and West End Avenue; both have a remarkably  
16 homogenous character; the avenues lined by large  
17 apartment buildings, creating a strong street wall  
18 with some clusters of row houses and mansions dating  
19 to the area's earlier periods of development. The  
20 side streets knit together these two great avenues  
21 and are lined with architecturally significant row  
22 houses, mansions and other residential buildings.  
23 With the exception of some neighborhood-oriented  
24 institutional buildings, including schools and  
25 religious structures, the proposed historic district  
is almost exclusively residential.

3 Built primarily between the mid 1880s to  
4 the early 30s, the district's buildings were designed  
5 by some of the city's most prominent architects and  
6 executed in the dominant styles of their eras,  
7 forming a distinct section of the city. The  
8 buildings along West End Avenue represent the various  
9 phases of development that quickly transformed this  
10 once rural area into a dense urban enclave of  
11 speculatively built single-family dwellings and high-  
12 rise apartment buildings. Rules established by the  
13 Tenement Act in 1901 determined the floor maxing and  
14 maximum height of new residential buildings until  
15 1929. These regulations contributed to the  
16 remarkably consistent height of apartment buildings,  
17 particularly on West End Avenue, even in buildings  
18 constructed almost two decades apart.

19 Throughout this district extension there  
20 are picturesque row house ensembles as well as  
21 several single-family homes. The proposed district  
22 originally included 377 building, however after  
23 extensive additional research and evaluation by  
24 agency staff, which took place after the public  
25 hearing in 2011, the Commission voted to approve  
modified boundaries and the district now contains 344



3 buildings centered on West End Avenue and Riverside  
4 Drive.

5 Subsequent to the June 23rd public  
6 meeting of the LPC, the Commission also received  
7 approximately 336 letters and emails regarding  
8 designation of Riverside-West End District Extension  
9 II. Of the total, five were opposed to designation  
10 and one owner requests removal of her building from  
11 the district. Among those in favor were 210 letters  
12 and emails opposed to modification of the boundaries  
13 as originally proposed, including letters from  
14 Congressman Nadler, State Assembly Member Danny  
15 O'Donnell, Council Member Helen Rosenthal with  
16 Speaker Mark-Viverito, New York Landmarks  
17 Conservancy, Landmark West!, West End Preservation  
18 Society and the Historic Districts Council. An  
19 additional 48 letters focused on retaining PS75  
20 located at 96th Street and West End Avenue, within  
21 the boundaries.

22 At the time that a district is calendared  
23 or even heard, the boundaries are not necessarily  
24 final, as our Research Department continues to  
25 investigate and the Commission receives information  
from interested members of the public; it is not

2 uncommon for boundaries to be refined during this  
3 process. For example, boundaries were modified for  
4 the Gansevoort Market Historic District, Addisleigh  
5 Park, Park Avenue and South Village Historic  
6 District, among others. In each case, changes have  
7 been made at the final public meeting when a vote is  
8 scheduled, after a presentation by the Research  
9 Department, as was done in this case.

10 This analysis was presented at a public  
11 meeting and discussed by the full Commission prior to  
12 the designation vote and as I mentioned, the  
13 Commission unanimously approved designation of 344-  
14 building district on June 23rd, 2015. Accordingly,  
15 Landmarks Preservation urges you to affirm the  
16 designation. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Thank you  
18 Miss George.

19 LAUREN GEORGE: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any questions from our  
21 members for Miss George? [background comments]  
22 Council Member Rosenthal; do you want to ask some  
23 questions? [background comments]

24 We are also joined by Council Member  
25 Barron and Council Member Greenfield.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so  
3 much Chair Koo for giving me this opportunity to  
4 speak. Welcome to the LPC.

5 As you'll hear from my testimony, and as  
6 I'm sure you've been briefed and you know, we're  
7 dealing with an issue that the community has been  
8 fully engaged in for... steeped in [sic], engaged in  
9 for four years, five years and actually much longer  
10 than that, because there was everything leading up to  
11 the meeting, the original hearing in 2011, so we're  
12 going back a long time. There's a lot of baggage  
13 that goes with this one.

14 So as stated previously, I'm a supporter  
15 of the district boundaries originally proposed,  
16 studied and considered at the LPC's public hearing on  
17 October 25th, 2011. Did either of you work at LPC  
18 then? You did? [background comment] Were you on  
19 this project?

20 LISA KERSAVAGE: Oh, in 2011... [background  
21 comment] I'm sorry, no, I was not there then.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. The  
23 historic... Can I just ask the audience; who worked on  
24 this project back in 2011; if you could raise your  
25 hands? If the record could show that, as far as I

2 can see, at least a half-a-dozen people have raised  
3 their hands, so including myself, I think we're the  
4 ones who know this issue inside out, and I am a  
5 supporter of the original lines that were heard at  
6 LPC discussed in full detail. As originally  
7 proposed, this historic district extension enjoyed  
8 widespread support from the local community; I was a  
9 member of Community Board 7 at the time and critical  
10 stakeholders, as you mentioned, like the local and  
11 state elected officials, citywide and local  
12 preservation groups and the public; there was a  
13 community board resolution on this that passed in  
14 full support. We all believe that the designation in  
15 its entirety would protect the neighborhood from the  
16 threat of inappropriate construction and development;  
17 however, this past June LPC decided to approve a map  
18 that cut out most of Broadway, as you can see, as  
19 well as some of what I call the PS75 block, which is  
20 bounded by 95th and 96th, West End Avenue and  
21 Riverside Drive; this was a disappointment. I share  
22 the concerns that we now have all heard from  
23 community stakeholders, including the West End  
24 Preservation Society, who has taken the lead on  
25 designating all of West End Avenue and an

2 organization that played an active role in working  
3 with the Commission previously, that the removal of  
4 these properties from the historic district leaves  
5 them vulnerable to out of context development -- I  
6 just said that -- and may threaten the fabric of the  
7 historic streetscape of the neighborhood. I think  
8 that their character and importance to the community  
9 warrant another look at the historic designation in  
10 the future, especially the PS75 block. Reevaluating  
11 these areas would help to limit development in what I  
12 believe to be a cohesive historic district and it  
13 raises the specter for me as a new-time council  
14 member about why neither City Planning nor the City  
15 Council can add buildings back into... put them back  
16 into [background comment] an originally considered  
17 and heard map.

18 So with some regrets about the final map  
19 and with the hope that we have the opportunity to add  
20 back in the buildings that were taken out, I'm going  
21 to urge my colleagues today to vote yes on the  
22 designation of the Riverside-West End Historic  
23 District Extension II.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Council  
25 Member Rosenthal. [background comment] You have a

2 question? Yeah. Okay. You want to ask question  
3 first? Yeah... [crosstalk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah; is that  
5 alright?

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Can I just  
8 ask, just to start, before my colleagues jump in, if  
9 I could go right to the PS75 block. What was your  
10 thinking in... you'll notice that the school is in,  
11 which is the large box, but the playground, which is  
12 right next to the highway, was taken out; what was  
13 the thinking about that and the thinking about the  
14 few buildings you took out and the buildings that, to  
15 my eye, look exactly the same that were left in, on  
16 95th Street in particular?

17 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well first let me say,  
18 the character of the district is apartment buildings  
19 and row houses for the most part; [background  
20 comment] some mansionesque kind of buildings mixed  
21 in. So the buildings on 96th Street, the original  
22 boundaries only covered the south side of the street;  
23 not the north... [interpose]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, I'm not  
3 looking at the north either; just the south...  
4 [crosstalk]

5 LISA KERSAVAGE: Right, but when we're  
6 looking at a historic district we do tend to look at  
7 the entire block...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure.

9 LISA KERSAVAGE: and so on the north  
10 there's a large apartment building and a gas station  
11 and on the south there is PS75 and then three  
12 tenement buildings and then the playground  
13 [background comment] on the edge of the boundary.  
14 And so the tenement buildings are not a typology that  
15 enhances the character of the district [background  
16 comment] and so we felt comfortable not including  
17 those buildings; that would just leave the playground  
18 on the edge and you know, we're looking for the  
19 strongest boundaries that we can with the most  
20 significant buildings included and a playground just  
21 didn't contribute to the district.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I guess my  
23 thinking was that 95th Street, you know is the  
24 entrance to the West Side, is one of the entrances to  
25 the West Side and coming off the highway onto 95th or

2 going onto the highway on 96th, that it'll diminish  
3 the character of the neighborhood if we see a high-  
4 rise in the place of where the playground is and so  
5 trying to use the language of LPC, I didn't  
6 understand why you would just take out those four  
7 buildings. I mean if you look at the buildings on  
8 95th right... that back into the tenement buildings on  
9 96th Street, they too are tenement buildings and yet  
10 they're left in.

11 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well we were looking..  
12 again, on 96th Street, so we were looking at both  
13 sides of the street and so that is what important  
14 approach... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Oh I'm sorry,  
16 so you're thinking that it would be okay... I'm not  
17 saying this... it's gonna come across the wrong way.  
18 So the way you're thinking about it is that given  
19 that the north side is not significant, which I agree  
20 with you a 100%; there's an Exxon-Mobil station  
21 there, that if a high-rise goes up there, why not  
22 have a high-rise on the south side?

23 LISA KERSAVAGE: No, that is not what I  
24 was saying... [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.



2 LISA KERSAVAGE: What we're looking at is  
3 the buildings that contribute to the historic  
4 district and ought to be protected and the tenement  
5 buildings aren't a building typology that creates the  
6 character of the district. So when we're looking at  
7 boundaries we're looking at what is significant  
8 architectural character and the tenement buildings  
9 and a playground were not seen to be contributing to  
10 this apartment building and row house district.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. You  
12 know, I'm gonna wait to hear from the experts who I'm  
13 familiar with who can use the language that you're  
14 using to explain why.. that just makes no sense to me  
15 whatsoever. But I think we're just speaking  
16 different languages and I'm looking at the character  
17 of an entrance to what is a beautiful street, West  
18 End Avenue and I'm thinking about the experience of  
19 someone entering or exiting that beautiful, what will  
20 now be a lovely historic, you know designated  
21 district and not understanding how an out of context  
22 building, regardless of whether or not the tenement  
23 building that there is now is beautiful or not  
24 beautiful, how a completely out of context glass  
25 high-rise would be in context, which is of course

2 what... by taking them out it's what you're asking;  
3 you're opening the door for developers to do exactly  
4 that and it would be naïve of LPC to think otherwise;  
5 right?

6 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, I'm not really  
7 sure how... [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It's not a  
9 question.

10 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry; I  
12 apologize. [background comment] Alright; that's all  
13 for now. Thank you so much, Chair.

14 [background comment]

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Now Council Member  
16 Barron.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you  
18 Mr. Chair. Just for clarification for my  
19 understanding of the process, in your testimony you  
20 said that there was one owner who requested removal  
21 of her building from the district, so is there... did  
22 you grant that request; is it in the district or out  
23 of the district?

24

25

2 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, I believe that was  
3 from the 2011 hearing [background comment] and...  
4 [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: No. No; this  
6 says [crosstalk, background comments] subsequent to  
7 the June 23rd, 2015 public meeting you received  
8 approximately 336 letters and emails regarding da...  
9 da... da... of the total, five were opposed to the  
10 designation and one on a requested removal of her  
11 building from the district, so this is the most  
12 recent, so... [crosstalk]

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yes. I apologize,  
14 Council Member; I am not sure whether that property  
15 owner's building is included in the district or not.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, generally  
17 in the process that works, if an owner requests that  
18 their property be removed, what are the factors that  
19 help you determine whether or not the property is  
20 removed?

21 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, we're... I mean  
22 we're looking at the significance of the architecture  
23 and whether it creates a special character in the  
24 district, so that's our primary consideration and so  
25 you know we did carefully study these boundaries to

2 make sure they're as strong and as defensible as  
3 possible, based on the architectural merit of these  
4 buildings.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right, but if an  
6 owner requests to be removed, what would cause you to  
7 say no, your building will not be removed?

8 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well and we do take  
9 those concerns very carefully; you know, with a  
10 historic district, the boundaries are drawn in a way  
11 that if an owner objects to designation and they're  
12 in the middle of a block in a historic district, we  
13 can't just carve out that one parcel... [crosstalk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so it's  
15 whether they're in the middle or whether they're on  
16 the fringe... [crosstalk]

17 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well my...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: because I see  
19 there are some carve-outs here.

20 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well yeah and you know  
21 we did do this analysis on the buildings on Broadway  
22 and on 109th Street and 96th Street, where we looked  
23 again; we did... you know, after the initial hearing in  
24 2011 we carefully researched these buildings and felt  
25

2 that those areas didn't contribute to the district,  
3 so that's why they were removed.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. I would  
5 just like to know what happened to that particular  
6 owner.

7 LISA KERSAVAGE: We'll follow up with you  
8 on that... [crosstalk]

9 [background comments]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

11 LISA KERSAVAGE: Thank you, Council  
12 Member.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any members  
16 have questions? [background comment] Okay, Council  
17 Member Rosenthal.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You know,  
19 Council Member Barron, I appreciate your asking that  
20 question because you're reminding me to sort of start  
21 from the beginning; I jumped into the weeds much too  
22 quickly. You know, just given your answer to Council  
23 Member Barron's last question, what's so interesting  
24 to me is that at the 2011 hearing the LPC was as  
25 committed and convinced about architectural integrity

2 regarding the buildings along Broadway; all of them  
3 were included in the original map. So is there a  
4 philosophical change; I mean surely the guideposts  
5 for architectural importance stayed the same between  
6 2009, 10 and 11 leading up to that hearing and to now  
7 and the only thing that I can imagine has changed --  
8 I can't imagine what's changed, actually.

9 LISA KERSAVAGE: So as you know, at that  
10 time in 2011 the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
11 calendared a number of extensions... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes.

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: and so it was a very  
14 large group of buildings... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yes.

16 LISA KERSAVAGE: and worked through them  
17 sequentially and so it was some 1200 buildings. So  
18 the process works that at the time that we were  
19 calendaring a district and then having the hearing  
20 and then doing all of the research on the buildings  
21 and confirming boundaries. What's changed now and  
22 moving forward as an efficiency measure with Chair  
23 Srinivasan is that we are calendaring a district and  
24 then doing the research and then presenting any  
25 amended boundaries at the hearing so people can

2 respond to those changes to the hearing on the public  
3 record. But at that time we weren't doing that, so  
4 that's why there's been, you know, four, five, six  
5 districts where the boundaries changed at the public  
6 meeting because the research into each building was  
7 done after the hearing.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You know it's  
9 so interesting, on this map you can't quite see it,  
10 and correct me if I'm wrong, but as you move farther  
11 south to the... all that hard work that LPC did for the  
12 three different designations, as you move south  
13 Broadway's included; I mean... [interpose]

14 LAUREN GEORGE: Parts of it; some of it  
15 are included in the existing districts in Extension  
16 I...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.

18 LAUREN GEORGE: I have a map here; I'm  
19 sorry I don't have copies... [crosstalk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah; that's  
21 alright.

22 LAUREN GEORGE: but there are carve-outs  
23 on it as well... [interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: There are some  
25 carve-outs.

2 LAUREN GEORGE: But I would also say  
3 that; I mean, you know, administrations change and  
4 priorities of the agency change, so I think that  
5 because of trying to be more efficient and clear up  
6 some of the backlog that we have, which you've seen  
7 in other areas, that might've affected the -- but I  
8 understand; obviously that's not... doesn't affect  
9 architectural character, but it is true that  
10 priorities and processes change.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I mean the  
12 only conclusion I can draw looking at this map is  
13 you're saying to developers, Broadway is open for  
14 business.

15 LISA KERSAVAGE: So of the previous  
16 extensions, there are 14 buildings included on  
17 Broadway...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay.

19 LISA KERSAVAGE: so it's not a majority  
20 of the avenue and... you know, so it was... this has  
21 always been a district's... districts focused on...  
22 [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah.



2 LISA KERSAVAGE: Riverside Drive and West  
3 End Avenue and the side streets in-between...

4 [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah; I'm just  
6 going back to what was originally heard in 2011,  
7 which was what the community saw as LPC's intention  
8 and you can understand why we're disappointed. And I  
9 would ask the Committee to be open to the possibility  
10 should LPC and should the community want to go back  
11 and ask for a designation of Broadway and the full  
12 PS75 block, as I'm calling it, to really encourage  
13 that and welcome it as I do. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay. Yeah, we will  
15 take a look into it, yeah. Anymore questions from  
16 our members? People from the public want to testify  
17 too. We will call groups of four and the first group  
18 in favor of this legislation is Diana Howard, Mark...  
19 [background comment] Mark Diller and Andrea Go...  
20 Godran... [background comment] Goldwyn and Josette  
21 Amato. Yeah. The A T... the ATM machine [sic]. Okay.

22 Due to time limitations, each person will  
23 have two minutes to speak. You can begin whichever  
24 order you guys prefer. [background comments] Yeah.  
25 Just identify yourself and then start.

3 DIANA HOWARD: Hello.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

5 DIANA HOWARD: Good morning. My name is  
6 Diana Howard; I'm a Community Liaison at the  
7 Manhattan Borough President's Office; I liaise  
8 through Community Board 7 and I'm here to read  
9 testimony on behalf of our office.

10 I'm here in support of the designation  
11 for Riverside-West End Historic District Extension  
12 II. This extension represents a large assemblage of  
13 architecturally significant residential building  
14 types, ranging from the 14-story apartment building  
15 dominating the corner to the single-family row houses  
16 on the midblock. The district itself is relatively  
17 homogenous in the development history and unified  
18 cornice [sic] lines on the block truly represent a  
19 sense of place. These buildings were also designated  
20 by some of our prominent and premier residential  
21 architects, so if someone did have a checklist for  
22 what's worthy of designation, this district has it.

23 Landmarking is a crucial component to  
24 preserving the diversity of our neighborhoods and it  
25 is essential that we balance our desire to expand  
with sensitivity to maintaining the unique character

3 of our neighborhoods. The value of historic  
4 designation can also be quantified as more than real  
5 estate prices. Historic districts are a collection  
6 of buildings that are architecturally, culturally or  
7 historically significant and it is the protection of  
8 that significance that has long been recognized as  
9 serving a legitimate public purpose. The creation of  
10 many of our historic districts has been product or  
11 intense debate in negotiation and once created have  
12 undergone expansions; however, portions of the  
13 district boundaries that were defined and agreed upon  
14 in 2011 were removed. When considering the  
15 boundaries of a district it is important to consider  
16 how many of the buildings within those boundaries  
17 contribute to telling the story of the neighborhood's  
18 development; that should not preclude the inclusion  
19 of properties that were vacant or that are not a  
20 particular style that predominates or has no style.

21 [bell] Finishing up... [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

23 DIANA HOWARD: A district is about the  
24 collection of buildings; not the individual and it is  
25 these individual pieces that tell the story together.  
Although originally proposed buildings were excluded

3 from the proposed extension, the designation of the  
4 district should proceed. Thank you for your time and  
5 I urge you to approve the Riverside-West End Historic  
6 District Extension II. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

8 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Good morning Chair Koo,  
9 Chair Greenfield and Council Member, I'm Andrea  
10 Goldwyn of the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

11 Nearly three decades ago the Conservancy  
12 testified in favor of the Riverside-West End Historic  
13 District, recognizing the exceptional group of  
14 buildings along the district's core, Riverside Drive.  
15 We're pleased to be here today to support designation  
16 of this extension anchored by the grand streetscape  
17 of West End Avenue. Like the original district, the  
18 extension is composed of masonry buildings  
19 representing phases of residential development  
20 designed by prominent architects of the 19th and 20th  
21 centuries. West End Avenue is lined with apartment  
22 buildings in limestone and brick, while the side  
23 streets are a standing array of brownstone and  
24 limestone row houses. Styles range from Romanesque  
25 and Renaissance Revival to Queen Anne and Beaux Art  
and many are enlivened with decorative ornamentation,

3 rustication, sculptural stone details, molded brick  
4 and terra cotta. Across the district the  
5 asymmetrical massing and varied rooflines of row  
6 houses form an attractive compliment to the stately  
7 symmetry of classical apartment buildings, creating  
8 an intact and cohesive sense of place.

9 Designation of the three West End  
10 extension districts rightly celebrates one of New  
11 York's great boulevards, but we're disappointed that  
12 the Landmarks Commission gave little public notice  
13 prior to excluding a number of buildings along  
14 Broadway and several side streets, which the agency  
15 itself had originally included in the district. The  
16 public needs an early and detailed notice if LPC  
17 intends to change district boundaries and an  
18 opportunity to speak before the Commission.

19 The Conservancy is pleased to join with  
20 neighbors, public officials and preservationists in  
21 support of this designation and in particular we're  
22 grateful to the West End Preservation Society for  
23 initiating the effort to expand the district. We  
24 look forward to working with owners who are stewards  
25 of the tremendous architectural heritage which  
distinguishes the Upper West Side. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

3 JOSETTE AMATO: Good morning Chair Koo;  
4 Council Members. My name is Josette Amato and I'm  
5 the Executive Director of the West End Preservation  
6 Society.

7 WEPS supports the designation of the  
8 Riverside-West End Historic District Extension II and  
9 we urge the Subcommittee to affirm that designation.

10 We echo the disappointment that more than  
11 30 buildings in this extension were unceremoniously  
12 removed by LPC prior to the designation vote. This  
13 northern extension contains buildings designed by the  
14 same architects, within the same time periods --  
15 [bell] I don't think so -- [laughter] in similar  
16 styles in materials as its protected neighbors; we  
17 believe it deserves those same protections.

18 Since 2007 WEPS has spearheaded the  
19 campaign for designation of West End Avenue and we  
20 are here today to see it through to its conclusion.  
21 Many major residential developments did not begin  
22 here until the late 1880s in the form of single-  
23 family dwellings. Row houses from that era still  
24 remain, though few without alteration; many gave way  
25 to grand apartment buildings on Riverside Drive and

3 West End in the second major development phase in the  
4 early 1900s. These wonderful buildings give West end  
5 Avenue its remarkably cohesive streetscape. This  
6 extension meets the criteria for a historic district;  
7 it has without doubt a unique sense of place; one  
8 only has to walk these blocks to appreciate the  
9 beauty and history recorded in its designation  
10 report. Not every building has made it through  
11 intact; some have been lost entirely, while others  
12 severely disfigured. We want to preserve its  
13 history, character and cultural heritage for present  
14 and future generations; too much has been lost to  
15 time. We want to enhance our dynamic community and  
16 assure the best quality of life for our residents;  
17 designation will do that for us, allow us to care for  
18 this final extension with the protection it needs and  
19 deserves. Thank you for considering our comments.

20 MARK DILLER: Thank you; good morning.

21 My name is Mark Diller; I'm a member of Community  
22 Board 7 on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. I am  
23 speaking I believe today in my own capacity, although  
24 I'm going to present to you our resolutions too on  
25 this subject. I believe I was the chair of the board  
when the public hearings were held and I believe

2 Council Member Rosenthal was the chair of the board  
3 when it was first passed by our board.

4           You're already heard plenty about the  
5 uniquely intact sense of place that West End Avenue  
6 presents to us and allows us to preserve. You've  
7 already heard more than I could possibly give you  
8 about the architectural significance of I believe the  
9 materials in front of you that tell you the  
10 architectural significance of this; there's also a  
11 historic significance to West End Avenue and  
12 especially the northern part of it and it has to do  
13 with what I'll call the "transit bump" where the  
14 introduction of public transit is an asset to a  
15 community and one of the reasons why this community  
16 shifted from single-family housing to grand apartment  
17 buildings so quickly in succession, so there are any  
18 number of reasons why this project merits the  
19 designation that the Landmarks Preservation  
20 Commission has urged us to adopt.

21           We at Community Board 7 lament the losses  
22 on the northern part of the district as do others; in  
23 fact that is the reason for the second of the two  
24 resolutions. First one passed in 2008, very early on  
25 in the process by a vote of 33-1 to 1-0; the second



2 one, specifically calling for the designation of the  
3 northern reach, passed by a vote of 32-1 to 0-0; the  
4 one just tells you it's the Upper West Side. The..  
5 [laughter] And not to put too fine a point on it,  
6 but there is a project going through the process  
7 right now on West 108th Street, which was part of the  
8 area that was under consideration for excision from  
9 the district; the architects involved have already  
10 told our committee that the changes we urge them to  
11 adopt make their project better; this is what  
12 designation can do for us [bell] and I urge you to  
13 pass the resolution. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any  
15 questions from members? Thank you very much.

16 [background comments]

17 Next we're gonna call on Faith Steinberg,  
18 since she's the only one opposing this landmark.

19 [background comments]

20 FAITH STEINBERG: Good morning and thank  
21 you for this opportunity. I... [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Please identify  
23 yourself first.

24 FAITH STEINBERG: My name is Faith  
25 Steinberg and I'm a native New Yorker and I've lived

2 on the Upper West Side for 42 years; it's a vital  
3 area and we speak out for what is right. By signing  
4 on to the Greenfield-Koo bill, the Commission will do  
5 additional harm to our neighborhood. I am referring  
6 to the buildings that have gone up in recent years;  
7 it seems as though the architects went to the Gotham  
8 City School of Architecture made famous by the Batman  
9 comics, the city of the future; good for the comics;  
10 for our neighborhoods, not so much.

11 Also, the enormous glass buildings often  
12 kill birds and many of the brick buildings that have  
13 gone up look like factories built to pack in as many  
14 people as possible. Greenfield-Koo bill gives the  
15 green light to the destroyers; developers is a  
16 misnomer, the only thing they develop is their bank  
17 accounts, the greed is palpable; they destroy our  
18 neighborhoods by putting up these huge sterile  
19 structures, bringing in more people in a neighborhood  
20 with a dense population... [interpose]

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Madame Steinberg, can I  
22 stop you a minute? Are you in favor or in opposition  
23 of this bill?

24 FAITH STEINBERG: I'm against the  
25 Greenfield-Koo bill... [interpose]

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: No, no.

3 FAITH STEINBERG: I...

4 [crosstalk, background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, you are on the  
6 wrong topic, yeah... [crosstalk]

7 FAITH STEINBERG: Well I just have a few  
8 more... [crosstalk]

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah...

10 FAITH STEINBERG: things to...

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: you're on the wrong,  
12 yeah.

13 FAITH STEINBERG: Well I signed the wrong  
14 thing; I... Anyway... [interpose]

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Alright, let's finish...  
16 finish what you have to say [sic]. Yeah. Yeah...  
17 [crosstalk]

18 FAITH STEINBERG: may I just finish,  
19 please...? [crosstalk, bell]

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay. Yeah. Can you  
21 finish up in... [crosstalk]

22 FAITH STEINBERG: Okay, it's...

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: one... one or two  
24 sentences?

25

2 FAITH STEINBERG: it's not much more.  
3 The increase in population requires more goods and  
4 services, creating traffic which brings in more  
5 pollution, overtaxing our infrastructure, the subway,  
6 sewage and electricity; I remember all the black and  
7 brownouts; it's also destroying our everyday quality  
8 of life; all the sheds and scaffolding that we must  
9 maneuver; as soon as one is up another is on the way.  
10 In addition, we have buildings updating for required  
11 repairs... [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Please finish up.

13 FAITH STEINBERG: and this is  
14 unavoidable, the awful stuff that's going up is  
15 avoidable. You are urged not to pass the Greenfield-  
16 Koo bill. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah. Yeah. You came  
18 at the wrong time... [crosstalk]

19 FAITH STEINBERG: I'm sorry for that  
20 mistake.

21 [background comments]

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: The next group for will  
23 be Howard Yavin... [background comments] Yarrow, Howard  
24 Yarrow... [interpose, background comments] Batya Lewton

25

3 and Kaye Wood and Kelly Carroll. [background  
4 comments] Please begin after identifying yourself.

5 HOWARD YURAL: Good morning Mr. Chair;  
6 I'm Howard Yural [sp?], Chair of the Friends of Hall  
7 of Fame for Great Americans, national historic  
8 landmark at Bronx Community College, relative new  
9 West Side resident; formerly of the Historic District  
10 Council Board and now on the Four Borough  
11 Neighborhood Alliance and I will take just a very few  
12 seconds to add my support for the extension of this  
13 beautiful district; also to regret, of course, the  
14 fact that some precious pieces were left out, but I  
15 think that we are all in strong support of the  
16 district as it is drawn now. So I just wanna add my  
17 voice as a citizen and preservationist and to urge  
18 the Committee to do the right thing and pass the  
19 legislation along to protect this beautiful corner of  
20 our city. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Next, yeah.

22 BATYA LEWTON: My name is Batya Lewton;  
23 I'm president of the Coalition for a Livable West  
24 Side. I'm not going to take much of your time. I  
25 fully support Council Member Rosenthal's statement  
and position and I thank the West End Preservation

3 Society for its leadership in getting these  
4 designations. Please support the designation.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

6 KATE WOOD: I'm Kate Wood; I'm here to  
7 speaking for Landmark West!; we also urge you to  
8 support this district. The better part of a decade  
9 ago the Upper West Side community and local leaders,  
10 including then Council Member Gale Brewer and then  
11 Community Board 7 Chair, Helen Rosenthal mobilized to  
12 expand existing small historic districts between  
13 Broadway and Riverside Drive; together this diverse  
14 collection of buildings tells a resident's story of  
15 how the Upper West Side became the Upper West Side.  
16 Here it's not just the architectural fabric that  
17 remains amazingly intact, but the social fabric as  
18 well. Even without historic district status,  
19 residents and property owners consider themselves  
20 stewards of the urban environment; they take care of  
21 one another and they take care of their buildings;  
22 designation is an important recognition of their  
23 efforts and a promise that they will be sustained for  
24 future generations.

25 As this subcommittee is aware, the LPC  
originally calendared a significantly larger historic

3 district than the one designated in June; the record  
4 shows extensive public support for this broader  
5 district, including Landmark West. Why were so many  
6 buildings left out, the community asked the LPC; at  
7 the vote, several Landmarks commissioners asked the  
8 same question themselves, apparently surprised by the  
9 chair's and the staff's sudden change of heart on the  
10 district boundaries. But what it came down to was  
11 lobbying by the Real Estate Board of New York; their  
12 influence overruled the will of the people.

13           The Landmarks Law does give the LPC the  
14 discretion to change its mind; new information comes  
15 to light, priorities shift; however, the law also  
16 gives the mayor great power over the landmarks  
17 preservation process; he appoints the commissioners,  
18 they serve at his pleasure, the chair especially; the  
19 only protection of the commissioners' political  
20 independence is their three-year term, subject to  
21 your advise and consent. As of today, 5 of the 11  
22 seats on the LPC are occupied by a commissioner whose  
23 term has expired, a 6th seat is vacant, meaning that  
24 half of the Landmarks commissioners [bell] are  
25 vulnerable to replacement by the mayor at a moment's  
notice.

2           So to conclude, I think you'll agree this  
3 is terrible government; as you contemplate reform of  
4 the landmarks process, I implore you to direct your  
5 energies where they are needed most, on ensuring that  
6 the LPC has the freedom to preserve landmarks on  
7 behalf of the people of this city. Freedom means  
8 political independence and adequate funding; their  
9 lack is the primary roadblock to the expeditious  
10 designation of landmarks. Today you have the  
11 opportunity to support and approve the designation of  
12 a worthy historic district. I urge you to do so; I  
13 also urge you to think about how to preserve the  
14 integrity of the landmarks process for future  
15 generations so that you don't face the same  
16 compromise protection of your landmarks in your own  
17 communities. Thank you.

18           CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, your  
19 suggestions are well-taken. [applause, background  
20 comments] Next please.

21           KELLY CARROLL: Good morning, I'm Kelly  
22 Carroll; I'm with the Historic Districts Council; we  
23 are testifying in favor of this district today.

24           At the June 23rd, 2015 public meeting of  
25 the Landmarks Preservation Commission it was noted



2 that this district has been seven years in the  
3 making, beginning with a focus survey and outreach  
4 effort on the part of the community members and  
5 preservation advocates. Originally calendared in  
6 2010 and heard in 2011, it was not designated until  
7 2015. Part of this delay was a change in  
8 administration, ongoing outreach to property owners  
9 and ultimately a significant change in historic  
10 district boundary lines. Despite these factors, the  
11 district is here today awaiting your approval and  
12 demonstrates the dynamic nature of historic district  
13 designation. As such, this district is a living  
14 example of how the proposed Intro 775 would have  
15 eclipsed the work and the mission of the Landmarks  
16 Preservation Commission and under the proposed  
17 timelines of this bill, this district would have  
18 resulted in non-designation, a moratorium of an  
19 architecturally meritorious area and several years of  
20 city resources prior to calendaring effectively  
21 wasted.

22           You all are aware of the Broadway issue  
23 and they were removed before a designation vote. As  
24 was discussed by the commissioners in that LPC public  
25 meeting a few months ago, HDC hopes that the

2 designation today of this district will not preclude  
3 the designation of a Broadway Historic District in  
4 the future. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any questions from our  
6 members? [background comment] No? Oh, Council  
7 Member Kallos.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Just wanted to  
9 thank you for your advocacy and for fighting the good  
10 fight and I share Council Member Rosenthal and your  
11 sentiment that I'm incredibly disappointed in the  
12 Landmarks Preservation Commission; I would welcome  
13 any testimony or suggestions on ways we could improve  
14 them so that they are more accountable and we do not  
15 end up in situations where they gut districts in  
16 order to promote construction and I just wanna thank  
17 West End Preservation Society, but this is not  
18 supposed to be the reason we don't landmark  
19 something; we're supposed to landmark things in order  
20 to prevent something like this going into a  
21 neighborhood where it's completely out of character.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any more  
23 questions from members? No? 'Kay. Thank you.

24 The next group will be Michael Got...  
25 Gohan... [background comment] Gotwin and Neil Fazel,

2 Lori... [background comment] Lori... yeah, Lori Malloy  
3 and Richard Robbins. Yeah, please identify yourself  
4 and then start.

5 MICHAEL GOTKIN: Hi, my name is Michael  
6 Got... [interpose, background comments] Okay. Hi,  
7 Michael Gotkin; I live in the neighborhood and I'm  
8 representing myself.

9 I wanted to start out with a question for  
10 you. You mentioned that seemingly the City Council  
11 and City Planning are powerless to compel the LPC to  
12 restore the original boundaries, and my question is;  
13 why are you powerless? I had a conversation with  
14 Richard Emery, and I wanna make clear, I do not  
15 represent Richard Emery's opinion here, just that I  
16 had a conversation with him about it; he seemed to  
17 think at one point that City Planning could restore  
18 the original boundaries, so I wanted to ask you that.  
19 Did you make an attempt to compel LPC to restore the  
20 original boundaries?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Absolutely  
22 yes; I made every attempt to add back in what we  
23 originally heard in 2011. I appreciate the question  
24 because I appreciate the opportunity to let you know  
25 this and researched the possibility of City Planning

2 and the City Council simply adding the buildings back  
3 in and our legal staff researched that extensively  
4 and that was not possible, but had it been within the  
5 City Council's purview to add it back in, that  
6 would've been my recommendation. Thank you for  
7 giving me the opportunity to say that.

8 MICHAEL GOTKIN: May I add one more  
9 thing? [background comment] Okay. You've heard a  
10 lot about it being a hom... the word homogenous  
11 district and I wanted to... I'm also an architectural  
12 historian... be sure that you understand; I think you  
13 do understand; it's actually a very heterogeneous  
14 district and one of the things that makes this  
15 district a bit distinct from the southern parts of  
16 West End is it has many different types of buildings  
17 within it and the LPC's logic for removing these  
18 buildings falls apart even on their own criteria.  
19 [background comment] Within the district that they  
20 approved are what they are calling tenement  
21 buildings; actually they're early precursors to  
22 apartment buildings, before the apartment building  
23 developed the format that we know today. Secondly,  
24 there are many large townhouses on Riverside Drive  
25 right next to tall 1930s buildings [bell] and you

2 have a very discontinuous historic district, which is  
3 exactly what gives it the vitality [background  
4 comment] and makes it interesting.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, please finishing  
6 up.

7 MICHAEL GOTKIN: Okay. And... [crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So I wanna remind all  
9 of you that you are here to give testimony; not to  
10 ask questions, first. After you give testimony, then  
11 we start questions. Alright... [crosstalk]

12 MICHAEL GOTKIN: Okay, I didn't realize  
13 [sic]. Oh, okay... [crosstalk]

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So let's finish, yeah.

15 MICHAEL GOTKIN: Alright. Well to finish  
16 up; just wanted you to be sure to put in the record  
17 that 109th Street was cut out of the district and  
18 those are a group of limestone and brick townhouses;  
19 every bit as valid as other townhouses in the  
20 district and they were cut because they've been  
21 bought by a developer and for no other reason.

22 [background comments] Thank you.

23 [background comments]

24 NEIL FAZEL: Good morning, my name is  
25 Neil Fazel; I'm a resident of the Upper West Side. I

2 should thank you for giving me this opportunity; I  
3 apologize that I don't have anything prepared, but  
4 this is a heartfelt testimony.

5 I recently returned to the Upper West  
6 Side after 6 years in Austin, Texas; prior to that I  
7 had lived in New York City for 12 years and 10 years  
8 in Vancouver, British Columbia. However, I returned  
9 to New York City and I thought about that; what is it  
10 about New York City that pulls me back; Austin, Texas  
11 and Vancouver, British Columbia are both very livable  
12 cities and I realized that it's the fact that New  
13 York City has neighborhoods like the Upper West Side.  
14 New York City is very dynamic, it's at the forefront  
15 of many trends; however it's being anchored by  
16 neighborhoods such as Upper West Side. When you walk  
17 on any street on the Upper West Side you sense the  
18 history of this place; you see everywhere signs that  
19 remind you of people who used to live here; what has  
20 transpired in this place and it's one of the major  
21 components that add charm to living in New York City  
22 that make New York City a much better, more livable  
23 place than Austin, Texas, with its great job market;  
24 it's the best employment market, or Vancouver, with  
25 its natural beauty, with its mountains, with its

2 oceans, and I could live in both places. So I would  
3 urge you to consider this please, because this is one  
4 of the things that make New York City a livable  
5 place. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

7 LORI MALLOY: Good morning. My name is  
8 Lori Malloy; I'm also speaking in support of the  
9 designation; I just came as an ordinary long-term  
10 resident of the area. My family actually goes back  
11 six generations in that part of the city, right back  
12 to civil war veterans, and the one thing that I try  
13 to teach my children is that you don't need to go to  
14 a museum to appreciate all the beauty and legacy that  
15 New York gives to us; all you need to do is take a  
16 walk around the neighborhood. And I'm also very  
17 disappointed that there were cutouts out of the  
18 original designation as nominated and I'm hoping  
19 you'll revisit that and I really do appreciate all  
20 that you do and I hope that you'll pass and approve  
21 this designation.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

23 RICHARD ROBBINS: Hi, I'm Richard  
24 Robbins; I'm a member of Community Board 7 and an  
25 Upper West Side resident, but I'm speaking in my own

2 capacity. One thing I found being on the Community  
3 Board is I hate hearings where everyone's saying the  
4 same thing and there's unanimous support, so I'm  
5 gonna be very brief.

6 Last week I took the train from New York  
7 City to [background comment] Philadelphia and was  
8 amazed just in seeing Union Station in Philadelphia  
9 and just the crime that happened 50 years ago in New  
10 York with the tearing down of Penn Station, which led  
11 to the origin [background comments] of the Landmarks  
12 Bill. The Upper West Side is clearly a historic  
13 district; the unanimous support here is very clear.

14 Speaking from personal experience, I live  
15 in a brownstone on the Upper West Side; the building  
16 next door to me, another in a row of brownstones, was  
17 enlarged illegally, it's one of the vacant buildings  
18 that the New York Times wrote about this past  
19 weekend, where the building was fully occupied, but  
20 the landlord claimed it was vacant and has... there are  
21 partially completed two stories on top of this  
22 building and a horrendous addition in the back; this  
23 is the kind of addition that clearly does not fit in  
24 our neighborhood; the fact that we have unanimous  
25 support in favor of this at today's hearing and from



2 the Community Board and from all the districts, I  
3 hope this is a very easy decision for you. Thank you  
4 very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank... [background  
6 comments] you have a question; right?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you. I  
8 just want to point something out which I think was  
9 raised, which is that unfortunately we do not have  
10 the ability to expand districts, in terms of what we  
11 do in the City Council; we do have the ability to  
12 shrink it. Obviously Council Member Rosenthal has  
13 been very clear that she supports this and would've  
14 wanted a larger district as well and certainly, as  
15 you know, we have a long tradition of supporting  
16 local council members; that's something that we  
17 would've wanted to do and I can assure you that she  
18 fought tooth and nail to try to get that done and  
19 it's not exactly what you wanted, but certainly it's  
20 significant. So had we had that ability we certainly  
21 would have done it; we just don't that ability here  
22 in the New York City Council, so we're limited to  
23 just supporting the projects [bell] or reducing them  
24 or voting them down altogether, so just wanted to  
25 address that issue, but certainly Council Member

2 Rosenthal has been a staunch advocate for your  
3 community and your district and if she had the power,  
4 I assure you it would be much larger than even the  
5 proposed district. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Chair  
7 Greenfield. Anymore questions from our members? No.  
8 Thank you. [background comment] Anymore members  
9 from the public want to speak on this item? Hearing  
10 none [sic], we will close the public hearing on this  
11 item, LU 286.

12 We will start our hearing on LU No. 285,  
13 landmark designation of Stonewall Inn in Manhattan in  
14 Council Member Johnson's district. [background  
15 comments] We have Lauren George and Lisa Kersavage  
16 gonna give testimony.

17 [background comments]

18 LAUREN GEORGE: Okay, item number two.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Item No. 285, yeah.

20 LAUREN GEORGE: 285, pardon me; the  
21 [background comments] second item we're discussing  
22 today.

23 So we're here to talk about the  
24 designation of the Stonewall Inn at 51 and 53  
25 Christopher Street in Manhattan... [background comment]

3 Sorry. I'm Lauren George, Intergovernmental Director  
4 at Landmarks Preservation Commission. Thank you for  
5 having us today, Chairman.

6 I'm here to testify about the Stonewall  
7 Inn, 51 and 53 Christopher Street in Manhattan, built  
8 1843, combined with a new façade in 1930 by architect  
9 William Bayard Willis as an individual landmark.

10 On June 23rd this year the Landmarks  
11 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the  
12 proposed designation of Stonewall Inn as a New York  
13 City landmark; the hearing was duly advertised in  
14 accordance with the provisions of law. Twenty-seven  
15 people testified in favor of this designation,  
16 including Public Advocate Tish James, Council Member  
17 Corey Johnson, Council Member Rosie Mendez,  
18 representatives of Comptroller Scott Stringer,  
19 Congressman Jerry Nadler, Assembly Member Deborah  
20 Glick, State Senator Brad Hoylman, BP Gale Brewer,  
21 Manhattan, Assembly Member Richard Gottfried,  
22 Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation,  
23 the Real Estate Board of New York, the Historic  
24 Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy,  
25 Family Equality Council, National Trust for Historic  
Preservation, National Parks Conservation

3 Association, Save Stonewall.org, Society for  
4 Architecture of the City, and Parents and Friends,  
5 Lesbians and Gays New York City, as well as three  
6 participants in the Stonewall rebellion, Martin  
7 Boyce, Jim Fouratt and Dr. Gil Horowitz of the  
8 Stonewall Veterans Association, and historians David  
9 Carter, Andrew Dolkart and Ken Lustbader.

10 In an email to the Commission May 21st,  
11 2015, Benjamin Duell of Duell LLC, the property  
12 owner, expressed his support for the designation.  
13 Council Member Margaret Chin and the Municipal Arts  
14 Society sent letters in support of the designation.  
15 In addition, the Commission received letters and  
16 emails from 105 individuals supporting the  
17 designation of Stonewall and three other LGBT sites.  
18 There was no testimony or written communication in  
19 opposition. This designation was approved  
20 unanimously by the LPC on June 23rd, which marks a  
21 record efficient timeframe between calendaring and  
22 landmark designation of a property.

23 As a starting point of the Stonewall  
24 rebellion on June 28th, 1969, the Stonewall Inn is  
25 one of the most important sites associated with LGBT  
history in New York City and the nation and arguably

3 the world. This cultural icon and the important  
4 events within it catalyzed the advancement of LGBT  
5 civil rights. In the late 1960s, when few  
6 establishments welcomed gays and lesbians and  
7 repressive laws made it impossible for a gay bar to  
8 obtain a liquor license, Mafia control of gay and  
9 lesbian clubs was a given and police raids were  
10 routine.

11 On June 28th, 1969, the Stonewall Inn was  
12 raided as part of a police crackdown on gay clubs,  
13 leading to a several-day uprising and protests and  
14 confrontations with police in an assertion of gay  
15 rights.

16 On June 28th, 1970, the first anniversary  
17 of the Stonewall rebellion, was commemorated as  
18 Christopher Street Liberation Day; the main event was  
19 a march from Greenwich Village to Central Park; that  
20 day pride marches were also held in L.A., San  
21 Francisco and Chicago in commemoration of Stonewall.  
22 Those celebrations have since grown into the  
23 internationally celebrated LGBT Pride Month with  
24 events held annually in June throughout the world.

25 The two buildings that comprise the  
Stonewall Inn were originally built in the 1840s as

2 stables and in 1930 were merged at the first story  
3 and given a unified façade. Their combined ground  
4 floor commercial space originally housed a bakery; in  
5 1934 it was taken over by Stonewall Inn Restaurant  
6 and reopened in 1967 as a gay club, retaining the  
7 name Stonewall Inn.

8 51 and 53 Christopher Street are within  
9 the Greenwich Village Historic District, which was  
10 designated April 29th, 1969, just months before the  
11 Stonewall uprising. From the time of the rebellion,  
12 the buildings still retained their brick cladding,  
13 arched entrances and small storefront windows, which  
14 were common among LGBT bars in the 1960s and stuccoed  
15 upper stories.

16 The landmark designation of Stonewall Inn  
17 marks the first time a site is designated as a New  
18 York City landmark primarily for its significance to  
19 LGBT history. Accordingly, the Landmarks  
20 Preservation Commission urges you to affirm this  
21 designation today. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Council  
23 Member Johnson, you have a statement?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair  
25 Koo. Good morning. It is an honor to have the

2 opportunity to speak today in favor of the landmark  
3 status for the Stonewall Inn, a site with deep  
4 significance to the global movement for LGBT rights  
5 and I am so proud that it's located within my council  
6 district.

7           Many cite the Stonewall uprising of 1969  
8 as the flashpoint for the beginning of the modern  
9 LGBT rights movement. Forty-six years ago the  
10 patrons of this bar decided to stand up to a then  
11 standard police raid, sparking days of protests that  
12 brought LGBT civil rights to the world's attention.

13           Today the New York City Council is taking  
14 an important and overdue step in recognizing and  
15 protecting this historic structure for future  
16 generations. The City's recognition of this site  
17 would bring it in line with the acknowledgment that  
18 the Stonewall Inn has already received elsewhere. In  
19 1999 it was listed on the National Register of  
20 Historic Places; the following year it was named a  
21 National Historic Landmark. It graces the pages of  
22 history books around the world and it serves as a  
23 major area of congregation every time the LGBT  
24 community celebrates another victory on our long road  
25 to equality.

3 On a pragmatic level, designating this  
4 site as a New York City landmark will protect it from  
5 potential future changes that could compromise the  
6 inn's prominent role in our city's history; it will  
7 preserve the site so that for future generations  
8 residents and visitors can travel there and see with  
9 their own eyes the place where the modern LGBT  
10 movement was born.

11 When I first came to New York -- I'm not  
12 a native New Yorker like many of the folks here --  
13 when I first came to New York the Stonewall Inn was  
14 the very first place I visited within an hour of  
15 coming to New York; I was 18 years old and I said, I  
16 have to go to Christopher Street and I was  
17 overwhelmed by what had taken place right where I was  
18 standing. I think that shows the beacon and the call  
19 that Stonewall gives to so many people around our  
20 country and around the world. I am extremely  
21 grateful for the progress that has been made in  
22 formally recognizing one of the most important  
23 structures in New York City, the Stonewall Inn.

24 I wanna thank Mayor de Blasio, LPC Chair  
25 Meenakshi Srinivasan, the Greenwich Village Society  
for Historic Preservation, all of my elected



2 officials who share the district with me for the role  
3 that they have played in this effort to make  
4 Stonewall Inn a New York City landmark, and Council  
5 Member Mendez and I both testified at that LPC  
6 hearing earlier this year and she is the senior  
7 member of the LGBT Caucus and has been an  
8 instrumental supporter in getting us to this day as  
9 well. So thank you Mr. Chair and thank you  
10 [background comment] to the LPC -- not because she's  
11 older; because she's been here since 2005 [background  
12 comments]; she's young a heart -- [background  
13 comments] we split at 5th Avenue; I have the west  
14 side of 5th Avenue; she has the east side of 5th  
15 Avenue; she's the lesbian of the east; I'm the  
16 lesbian of the west, so she and I work together.  
17 Thank you Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Council  
19 Member Johnson. Anymore questions from our members?  
20 Council Member Mendez; no? No. [background  
21 comments] Any members from the public who want to  
22 speak on this item? Hearing none, we will close on  
23 this item. Oh yeah, okay. [background comments] We  
24 have Mark Diller. Are you in favor or opposing  
25 this...? [interpose]

2 MARK DILLER: I am in favor.

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay.

4 MARK DILLER: My name is Mark Diller; I'm  
5 a member of Community Board 7, which is in the Upper  
6 West Side of Manhattan, but another volunteer hat  
7 that I wear is as a group marshal for the Pride  
8 Parade every year; I just wanted to amplify what  
9 Council Member Johnson offered, which is that every  
10 year the epicenter of the Pride March is right at the  
11 Stonewall; it is a moving and stirring part of that  
12 march and I would, for that reason alone, echo the  
13 sentiment and offer that this should be approved.  
14 Thank you very much for the time.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any  
16 questions? [laughter] Any questions for... We will  
17 close public hearing on Item No. 285. The last item  
18 we're gonna discuss today will be LU No. 284,  
19 landmark designation for the Corbin Building in  
20 Manhattan. This item is in Council Member Chin's  
21 district... [background comments] she has submitted a  
22 letter of support for the designation. So we will  
23 ask Lauren George and Lisa Kersavage again to  
24 testify. Thank you.

25 LAUREN GEORGE: Thank you Chairman Koo.

3 So we're here today to testify about the  
4 Corbin Building at 11 John Street, also known as 1-13  
5 John Street or 192 Broadway in Manhattan. The  
6 building was built in 1889 by Francis Kimball as an  
7 individual landmark.

8 May 12th of this year, the LPC held a  
9 public hearing on the proposed designation of the  
10 Corbin Building; the hearing was advertised in  
11 accordance with the provisions of law. At that  
12 hearing there were four speakers in favor of the  
13 designation, including a representative of the  
14 Metropolitan Transit Authority, the MTA,  
15 representatives of the Historic Districts Council,  
16 New York Landmarks Conservancy and Citizens for  
17 Downtown. The Commission also received a letter in  
18 support of designation from Council Member Margaret  
19 Chin. There were no speakers in opposition. This  
20 designation was approved unanimously by Landmarks on  
21 June 23rd, 2015, again marking a record efficient  
22 timeframe between calendaring and landmark  
23 designation of a property, little note.

24 The Corbin Building was constructed,  
25 again, in 1888-1889, a time of tremendous growth in  
Lower Manhattan; it's a remarkable surviving example

3 of a tall office building from the earliest period of  
4 development. It was named for its owner, Austin  
5 Corbin, a wealthy businessman who owned the Long  
6 Island Railroad and was the work of prominent New  
7 York architect Francis Kimball, as mentioned, who is  
8 known for his pioneering work, including the creation  
9 of caisson foundations and the design of distinct New  
10 York Buildings, including the Montauk Club, the  
11 Manhattan Life Building and the Standard Building,  
12 along with several churches and theatres.

13 This building is notable for many  
14 reasons. The 8-story transitional skyscraper once  
15 loomed over most of its neighbors; it features a cage  
16 construction with cast iron beams and baring masonry  
17 walls, a system which predates the steel frame which  
18 allowed buildings to grow further upward. It was  
19 designed in the animated Françoise first [sic] style  
20 with numerous layers of exterior stone, brick and  
21 terra cotta and abundant gothic-inspired details.  
22 The iron window frames also featured embossed  
23 designs, making them prominent in the façade. The  
24 building was fully restored by the MTA in connection  
25 with the construction of the Fulton Transportation  
Center, including the replacement of its pyramidal

2 tower roofs, reconstruction of ground level stores  
3 and the replacement of windows. The LPC urges you to  
4 affirm this designation today. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any  
6 questions on... Council Member Barron.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr.  
8 Chair.

9 I do have the remarks, the research that  
10 the Landmarks Preservation Commission presented in  
11 terms of the Corbin Building; [background comment]  
12 are you familiar with this?

13 LAUREN GEORGE: Yes. Uhm-hm.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. As we may  
15 know, this entire area has rich significance in terms  
16 of the Africans who were here, who had been enslaved  
17 and helped to develop this area, [background comment]  
18 built the wall, paved Broadway and brought it all the  
19 way up and I wanted to know why there was no mention,  
20 at least none that I have seen, about the area and  
21 that significant historical piece.

22 LISA KERSAVAGE: What we've distributed  
23 is just a short statement of significance;  
24 [background comment] we actually have a full  
25

2 designation report that's accessible online that  
3 does... [crosstalk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, that's not  
5 the des...

6 LISA KERSAVAGE: That's not that, no.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's not. Okay.

8 LISA KERSAVAGE: We just wanted to give  
9 you the summary and that does include the whole range  
10 of development issues and prior to... [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And does it  
12 include... Does it include information about the  
13 contributions of the enslaved Africans who were here  
14 at that time?

15 LISA KERSAVAGE: We've been making great  
16 effort to include that history in the designation  
17 reports and I would need to check and get back to  
18 you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. I would  
20 love to receive a copy of the full report...

21 [crosstalk]

22 LISA KERSAVAGE: Absolutely.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: and if it needs  
24 to be amended to include that, I would ask that you  
25 do that.

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2 LISA KERSAVAGE: We'll certainly send it  
3 to you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Anymore questions?  
6 Any... Thank you. Any members from the public want to  
7 testify? No, hearing none. We will close item...  
8 [background comment] yeah. We will close public  
9 discussion on Item 284. [background comments] So  
10 I'm gonna... [background comment] I'm gonna couple for  
11 vote to approve Land Use Items 284, 285 and 286. Mr.  
12 Counsel, would you please make the roll call?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye on all.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
16 Arroyo.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Yes.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
19 Mendez.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
22 Barron.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye on  
24 all.

25

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
3 Kallos.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Land Use Nos. 284,  
6 285 and 286 are approved by a vote of 5 in the  
7 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions and  
8 they're referred to the full Land Use Committee.

9 [background comments]

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We're gonna...

11 [background comments]

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye on all.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Final vote on Land  
15 Use Items 284, 285 and 286 are 6 votes in the  
16 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you very much;  
18 this Landmark meeting is adjourned.

19 [gavel]

20 Thank you.

21 [background comments]

22

23

24

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 30, 2015