

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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July 8, 2025
Start: 10:14 a.m.
Recess: 10:26 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY, COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah M. Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Justin Donlon, New York City Housing
Preservation and Development

Margaret Herman, Director of Research at the New
York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

Steven Thomson, New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

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SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
microphone check on Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public
Sittings and Dispositions. Today's date is July 7h,
2018, recorded by Tayshia Sherman.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
welcome to today's New York City Council hearing on
the Committee of Landmarks, Public Sittings and
Dispositions.

At any point during today's hearing, no
one may approach the dais.

If you'd like to testify, please see one
of the Sergeants in the back to sign up to testify.

Chair, you may begin.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
everyone. Welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee
on Landmarks, Public Sittings, and Dispositions. I'm
Council Member Kamillah Hanks, and I'm the Chair of
the Subcommittee. Today, I'm joined by my Colleagues,
Council Member Marte.

Before we begin with today's agenda, I
will remind everyone that this meeting is being held
in a hybrid format. And for members of the public who
wish to testify remotely, we ask that you first
register online, and then you may do so now by

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visiting www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up, and
then sign into the Zoom and remain signed in until
you have testified.

For anyone with us today who's wishing to
testify, and if you've not already done so, please
see one of the Sergeants and fill out a speaker's
card, and we will call your name in the appropriate
time.

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

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

The witness table is reserved for people
who wish to testify. No video recording or
photography is allowed from the witness table.

Further, members of the public may not present audio

or video recordings as testimony, but may submit the transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant for including for the hearing record.

So today I will open up hearing for Pre-Considered Land Use item 993-995 Union Avenue Cluster Amendment, an application submitted by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development for an approval of an amendment of a project summary in correction with the previously approved Urban Development Action Area Project in Chair Salamanca's District in the Bronx.

Appearing today on this proposal is Justin Donlan.

Those wishing to testify, once again, that must register online by visiting the Council's website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse.

Panelists, please ensure that your microphone is on, so red for go, which is indicated by the red light.

Counsel, will you please administer the affirmation?

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

JUSTIN DONLON: Justin Donlan.

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

JUSTIN DONLON: I do.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. You may
begin.

JUSTIN DONLON: Thank you, Chair. I
appreciate the time today.

So, the 993-995 Union Avenue Cluster was
originally approved by Council as an Urban
Development Action Area Project in 2021, and it's
composed of four buildings: 993 Union Avenue, 995
Union Avenue, 774 Union Avenue, and 1042 Longfellow
Avenue. Now, the property in question today is 1042
Longfellow Avenue, which you can see on the map
highlighted on the right-hand side in yellow and red.
So, these buildings were a cluster part of our Tenant
Interim Lease Program, and in 2021, with the Council
approval, they were rehabilitated under the
Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program. Now, in
2023, since none of the tenants at 1042 Longfellow
Avenue had chosen to relocate back into the building,
because during the ANCP conversion process, we do gut

rehab, so tenants are required to be relocated. So, they chose not to return to the building, and with that, the agency made the decision that we should operate as a rental to ensure financial and operational feasibility. And also, typically, with the ANCP program, 80 percent of the residents in the building have to opt in to convert to a cooperative, and in this case, they had chosen not to.

So, today, what we're requesting is an amendment to the originally approved project to allow for a rental option versus the originally approved cooperative option pursuant to Section 694 of the general municipal law.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. I'd like to recognize any of my Colleagues that have any questions.

Seeing none, thank you so much. The applicant panel is now excused.

I'd like to recognize Council member Nurse, who has also joined us.

Thank you, you are excused.

Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish to testify on this item?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No.

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CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. If there are any remote public participants who wish to testify and have not already done so, please raise the raise hand button now. And if you are here with us in person, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out the speaker card.

Seeing no other members of the public who wish to testify regarding Pre-Considered Land Use item 993-995, Union Avenue Cluster amendment, the public hearing is now closed, and this item is laid over.

I will now open a public hearing for pre-Considered Land Use item, the Modulightor Building Apartment Complex, an application submitted by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission for the designation of a landmark in Council Member Powers' District in Manhattan.

Appearing today on this proposal is Steven Thomson and Margaret Herman.

Again, those wishing to testify remotely must register online by visiting the Council's website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse.

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Panelists, please ensure that your
microphone is on, which is indicated by the red
light.

Counsel, would you please administer the
affirmation?

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

MARGARET HERMAN: Margaret Herman.

STEVEN THOMSON: Steven Thomson.

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

MARGARET HERMAN: I do.

STEVEN THOMSON: I do.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. You may
begin.

STEVEN THOMSON: We do have a slight
presentation. Thank you.

MARGARET HERMAN: Good morning, Chair
Hanks and Subcommittee Members. My name is Margaret
Herman, Director of Research at the Landmarks
Preservation Commission. Thank you for the

opportunity to present our recent interior landmark designation of the Modulightor Building apartment duplex located at 246 East 58th Street in Manhattan. Next slide.

The Modulightor Building's apartment duplex is an important late 20th century modern interior by the American architect Paul Rudolph. On February 25th, 2025, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a New York City interior landmark. Four people spoke in support of designation, including representatives of the Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture, Docomomo U.S. Historic Districts Council, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. No one spoke in opposition. The Commission also received 10 written submissions in favor of designation, including submissions from the NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project and the Iconic Houses Foundation. Next slide.

Located in Midtown Manhattan on the south side of East 58th Street near 3rd Avenue, the apartment duplex occupies the third and fourth floor of the building, which was designated an individual landmark in 2023. Next slide.

The interior landmark site includes the entire third and fourth floors outlined in red, including the entrance hall, north and south living rooms, four bedrooms, balconies, kitchens, and bathrooms. Next slide.

The Modulightor building was constructed in phases starting in 1993. Planned as twin rental apartments, the apartment duplex received a temporary certificate of occupancy in June 1994. These units were first leased to tenants in 1996. Following Rudolph's death in 1997 and the settling of his estate in 2001, his partner Ernst Wagner moved into the building, combining the north and south units into a single apartment that also functioned as headquarters of the newly established Paul Rudolph Foundation, later the Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture. Next slide.

Rudolph purchased the property in February 1989. He and Wagner, who co-founded the Modulightor Lighting Company in 1976, developed a plan to rebuild the existing 1960s structure as a sales showroom and residential space. Next slide.

Rudolph was a leading and sometimes controversial figure in American architecture during

the later half of the 20th century. He attended Auburn University and the Harvard Graduate School, where he developed a distinctive modern aesthetic using industrial materials like concrete and steel. Rudolph moved his thriving practice to Manhattan in the 1960s, during the period when he headed the Yale School of Architecture, which he designed in 1958 to 1963. A prolific designer of exquisite private residences and major public buildings, he was also an inventive interior designer who created a significant group of multilevel spaces that were praised for their distinctive forms and daring spatial complexity. Next slide.

The all-white apartment duplex has a fragmented open plan divided by partial walls and partitions. Significant architectural features include the tile floors, two staircases, exposed metalwork, fireplaces, lighting fixtures, and built-in furniture. In a 2004 article titled An Architect's Last Word, architect Joseph Giovanni wrote in the New York Times, "inside and out, the triumph of the design is that Rudolph pulled off the kaleidoscopic complexity with wallboard and off-the-rack metal studs and joists. For Rudolph, the richness of the

materials didn't matter. He aimed at the same spatial qualities regardless of materials. It was space itself, Rudolphian space, that counted." Next slide.

Traversed by floating open stairs that rise and turn as well as cantilevered balconies and landings that project over the lower floor, New York Times critic Jason Farago wrote in 2018 that these elegant interlocking spaces provide a corrective to the view of Rudolph as a brutalist heavyweight. Next slide.

A highly significant late work by Paul Rudolph, the Modulightor Building apartment duplex today is home to the Paul Rudolph Institute for Modern Architecture and is open to the public by appointment and through regularly scheduled open houses. Next slide.

The Modulightor Building apartment duplex is the only publicly accessible interior by Paul Rudolph in New York City, and LPC was thrilled to add this extraordinary space to our special collection of designated interior landmarks. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.

Now I'd like to recognize any of my Colleagues who have any questions or remarks.

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Thank you. The panel is now excused.

Counsel, are there any members of the
public who wish to testify on this item?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. Are there any
remote public participants who wish to testify and
have not already done so? Please press the raise hand
button now, and if you are here with us in person,
please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a
speaker card.

There being no members of the public who
wish to testify regarding Pre-Considered Land Use
item for the landmarking of the Modulightor building
apartment complex, this hearing is now closed and
this item is now laid over.

And that concludes today's business. I
would like to thank the members of the public, my
Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff,
Sergeant-at-Arms for your participation today.

This meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

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 August 31, 2025