

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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November 21, 2013

Start: 11:38 a.m.

Recess: 11:58 a.m.

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

B E F O R E:

BRAD S. LANDER

Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO

ROSIE MENDEZ

ANNABEL PALMA

JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: [off mic] Good morning. I'm CRC council member Brad Lander. I'm pleased to call this meeting of the city council Land meeting.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Pleased to call this meeting of the city council's Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting, Maritime Uses together. Very happy to be joined by council member Annabel Palma from the Bronx and council member Rosie Mendez from Manhattan. We have three proposed landmark designations on the calendar this morning. One in Brooklyn and two in Manhattan. And I'm very pleased to invite Jenny Fernandez from the Landmark's Preservation Commission to come up and present them. The first one is Land Use number 968, application number 20145123 and accompanying N 140116 the Long Island Business College at 143 South 8th Street in council member Reyna's district.

JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you chair Lander and council members. My name is Jenny Fernandez Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation

Commission. I'm here today to testify on the commission's designation of the Long Island Business College in Brooklyn. On June 25th 2013 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held the public hearing on the proposed designation as a landmark of the Long Island Business College. Two people spoke in favor of designation including representatives of council member Diana Reyna and of the historic district's council. The commission also received a letter in favor of designation from the Victorian Society of New York. There were no speakers in opposition to designation. On September 17th, 2013 the commission voted to designate the building in New York City individual landmark. Designed by William H. Gaylor the Long Island Business College was built by Henry Wright who founded Wright's Business College in Williamsburg in 1873. Like other such colleges of the time Wright trained clerical workers, primarily young men and women for careers with the many large banks, insurance companies, and industrial concerns that were proliferating throughout Brooklyn and then the separate city of New York. Enrollment in Wright's college boomed and in 19, in 1890 he

1 purchased the lot at 143, 149 South 8th Street for
2 a grand new home for the school which would be
3 renamed the Long Island Business College. Gaylor
4 based the school's design on Brooklyn's recent
5 public schools. The 90 thousand dollar building
6 opened with a reception attended by Brooklyn's
7 Mayor. Wright called it perhaps the only building
8 in the country erected and devoted solely to the
9 work of business education. In 1920 the college
10 itself was sold and moved to a different Brooklyn
11 location and in 1922 the building reopened as
12 public school 166. In 1943 it became the early home
13 of the Beth Jacob Teachers Seminary of America. And
14 after World War II the building became a magnet for
15 hundreds of young holocaust survivors who sought to
16 further their studies. The Long Island Business
17 College building combines Romanesque Revival and
18 Second Empire styles and remains a rich cultural
19 historical and architectural presence command,
20 commanding presence in South Williamsburg. The
21 commission urges you to affirm this designation.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
24 much. Any, any, do we know what it's being used as
25 or used for today.

2 JENNY FERNANDEZ: It's currently
3 residences. It's being used as residences.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Any, oh we've been
5 joined by council member Williams from Brooklyn
6 welcome. Any questions for Ms. Fernandez on this
7 item? Great as you heard they had council member
8 Reyna supporting the project and no one speaking in
9 opposition so. And we have no one signed up to
10 testify today on the public hearing. So if there
11 are no further questions, no one signed up to
12 comment we will go ahead and close the public
13 hearing on this item.

14 [gavel]

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And move forward to
16 our next land item, land use number 969 application
17 20145106 and accompanying 140103 the Steinway &
18 Sons Reception Room and Hallway at 109-113 West
19 57th Street in council member Garodnick's district
20 in Manhattan.

21 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you chair
22 Lander. My name is Jenny Fernandez Director of
23 Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the
24 Land Mark's Preservation Commission. I'm here today
25 to testify on the commission's designation of the

2 Holland Plaza Building in Manhattan. I'm sorry I
3 got the wrong one.

4 [laughter]

5 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I apologize I'm giving
6 out the wrong one.

7 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We can do that one.

8 JENNY FERNANDEZ: We can do that one?
9 It's up to you. No, we'll just do Steinway. You
10 read it in. Apologize.

11 Once again I'm here to testify on the
12 commission's designation of the Steinway & Sons
13 Reception Room and Hallway in Manhattan. On July
14 23rd, 2013 the Land Marks Preservation Commission
15 held the public hearing on the proposed designation
16 of the Steinway & Sons Reception Room and Hallway.
17 Three people spoke in support of designation
18 including the owner and representatives of the
19 historic district's council and the society for the
20 architecture of the city. On September 10th, 2013
21 the commission voted to designate the building a
22 New York City interior landmark. Commissioned by
23 the prominent New York City piano manufacturer
24 Steinway & Sons in 1924-25, the Steinway & Sons
25 Reception Room and Hallway is one of New York

1 City's most impressive Neo-Renaissance style
2 interiors. Located in Steinway Hall a designated
3 New York City landmark on the north side of West
4 57th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues the primary
5 space is a double height octagonal rotunda where
6 visitors, musicians, and potential customers meet
7 store representatives before entering various piano
8 showrooms. Visible from the street through a large
9 display window and from the adjoining hallway that
10 leads to the building's elevator lobby this
11 lavishly decorated room has a shallow dome ceiling
12 with allegorical murals in the 18th century style
13 of the celebrated Swiss/Austrian painter Angelica
14 Kauffman as well as a crystal chandelier. Walter
15 Hopkins of the architectural firm Warren and
16 Wetmore co-designers of Grand Central Terminal
17 planned the building and interiors working with the
18 decorative painters Paul Arndt and Cooper &
19 Gentiluomo. Visitors enter from 57th Street passing
20 through a small foyer that merged the adjacent
21 hallway. Each side of the rotunda features a white
22 marble arch that rests on fluted ionic columns
23 flanked by green marble pilasters. Through a large
24 three glass door and glazed and fill
25

1 seprets[phonetic], separates the rotunda from the
2 hallway. These spaces read as one due to the use of
3 similar architectural elements and materials. At
4 the time of the building's completion the reception
5 room garnered considerable attention in the press
6 appearing in the pages of the Architectural Record,
7 Architecture and Building magazine and the Music
8 Trade Review. A seemingly timeless monument to
9 classical music and architecture as well as
10 Steinway and sons this well preserved interior
11 remains one of the handsomest retail spaces in New
12 York City. The commissioner urges you to affirm
13 this designation.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And I'll just refer
16 members to the beautiful pictures at the back of
17 the designation report. You'll find it hard to
18 argue with the landmark worthiness of this interior
19 designation and I'm pleased to report as you can
20 see from the committee notes that this designation
21 is supported by the owner of the property. Any
22 questions about this item? People shopping for
23 pianos?

24 [laughter]

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: No. On this item as
3 well we have no one signed up to testify so unless
4 someone speaks now we'll go ahead and close the
5 public hearing on this...

6 [gavel]

7 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: ...item as well. And
8 move to our third and final item on today's agenda
9 which is land use number 970 application 20145124
10 HKM and accompanying N 140117 HKM, the Holland
11 Plaza Building. Also known as One Hudson Square at
12 75 Varick Street in Speaker Quinn's district in
13 Manhattan.

14 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you chair Lander
15 and committee members. My name is Jenny Fernandez
16 Director of Intergovernmental and Community
17 Relations for Land Mark's Preservation Commission.
18 I'm here today to testify on the commission's
19 designation of the Holland Plaza Building in
20 Manhattan. On June 11th, 2013 the Land Mark's
21 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
22 the proposed designation as a landmark of the
23 Holland Plaza Building, now One Hudson Square.
24 There were two speakers in favor of designation
25 including the owner and a representative of the

1 historic district's council. On September 24th,
2 2013 the commission voted to designate the building
3 a New York City individual landmark. The Holland
4 Plaza building is a large modern classical style
5 manufacturing structure constructed on an
6 irregularly shaped lot facing the entrance to the
7 Holland Tunnel in 1929, 1930. The building location
8 was chosen to take advantage of the new
9 transportation hub then developing at the entrance
10 to the newly constructed tunnel linking New York
11 and New Jersey. One of the most significant
12 buildings by celebrated architect Ely Jacques Kahn
13 the Holland Plaza building displays a modern
14 functional architectural vocabulary influenced by
15 the contemporary expressionist brick buildings of
16 Germany and Holland. Kahn popularized the style in
17 his, in this, in his numerous remarkable commercial
18 buildings built throughout New York City.
19 Positioned on a prominent site the Holland Plaza
20 building displays a dramatic style that emphasizes
21 the structural grid with applied ornament. The
22 building's developer was Abe Abelson. One of the
23 garment manufacturers who took part in the creation
24 of the original garment center capital building in
25

1 1920-21 and later became one of Kahn's most
2 consistent and supportive employers. As an
3 immigrant and entrepreneur Abelson did not have
4 preconceived ideas about classical architecture and
5 encouraged the development of Kahn's creativity in
6 the service of good buildings that attracted many
7 commercial clients. In the Holland Plaza Building
8 the combined requirements of client and architect
9 resulted in one of Kahn's great masterpieces. The
10 commission urges you to affirm this designation.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much
13 and in this case again as well the owner supports
14 the designation which we always like to see. Any
15 questions about this from members of the committee?
16 We also have no one signed up to testify on this
17 item. Though I'll note that several speakers as Ms.
18 Fernandez said spoke in favor of it at the LPC. So
19 hearing none we'll go ahead and close the item, the
20 hearing...

21 [gavel]

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: ...on this item as
23 well and move forward to vote on all three items on
24 today's calendar. Land uses number 968, 969, and
25 970 but before we do council member Williams.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you... I
3 just have an errand question, nothing to do with
4 this, we're trying to follow up, been trying to
5 follow up on Victorian Flatbush... [interpose]

6 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...landmarking.
8 So I'd just like to know what's going on with it.

9 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Sure. Council member
10 Williams thank you for bringing that up. I had
11 reached out to your staff maybe about several weeks
12 ago just letting them know that we have completed
13 the survey of the, the six areas that were
14 submitted and the staff is analyzing the
15 information and a site visit was required. So the
16 staff is conducting that as we speak and they
17 should be coming up with an analysis very soon. So
18 we have some preliminary findings. I would say
19 within the next two to three weeks we should have
20 at least a preliminary out of all the different
21 areas that were submitted the initial feedback from
22 the research staff.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Do you, Do you
24 have preliminary findings now or you'll have...
25 [crosstalk] [interpose]

2 JENNY FERNANDEZ: We have preliminary
3 findings in terms of some of the areas that are
4 deemed eligible and now the staff is going to go
5 back out and survey the area.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

7 JENNY FERNANDEZ: You know? Do site
8 visits because a lot of the stuff is just from the
9 information that was submitted to the staff. They
10 research that. You know they look through that
11 information which was very helpful by the way. The
12 community did put together a really great proposal.
13 And so now they have to just kind of confirm on the
14 ground and go out and see.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Can we see the
16 preliminary findings?

17 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I mean sure. Yeah,
18 we're actually going to be ready to share...
19 [interpose]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

21 JENNY FERNANDEZ: ...that with you very
22 soon so... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

24 JENNY FERNANDEZ: ...yes absolutely.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay so we'll
3 proceed to vote on Land Use numbers 968, 969, and
4 970 coupled on the subcommittee calendar.

5 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Chair Lander.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Aye on all.

7 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Council member
8 Palma.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye on all.

10 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Council member
11 Mendez.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Just wanted to
13 say that this Long Island Business College was in
14 my old stomping grounds and I've never noticed it.
15 The community where I was born and raised, just
16 across the river and as the chair pointed out Emma
17 Goldman and Eugene Debs spoke there so this is very
18 interesting history in my old community. With that
19 I vote aye on all.

20 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Council member
21 Williams.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Aye.

23 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: By a vote of four
24 in the affirmative, zero abstentions, zero
25 negatives Land Use items 968, 969, and 970 are

2 approved and referred to the full Land Use
3 Committee.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We'll hold...

5 [pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I'll point out not
7 only was it you know Emma Goldman and Eugene Debs
8 but they were speaking at a business college so a
9 different time in New York City wasn't it?

10 [laughter]

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Socialists and the
12 anarchists spoke at the business schools. It's a
13 little journey subcommittee and to hold the role
14 open for ten minutes for council member Arroyo.

15 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

17 [background comments]

18 [pause]

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Council member
20 Arroyo.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye on all.

22 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: By a vote of five
23 in the affirmative, zero abstentions, and zero
24 negatives Land Use items 968, 969, and 970 are

2 approved and referred to the full Land Use
3 Committee.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: ...It is yeah.

5 Landmarks Subcommittee November 21st now adjourned.

6 [gavel]

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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 _____ December 04, 2013 _____