

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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July 21, 2014
Start: 11:00 a.m.
Recess: 12:00 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
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

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

Joni Fernandez, Director
Intergovernmental and Community Relations
Landmarks and Preservation Commission

Tricia Shimamura
Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney's Office

Marco Tamayo, Architect
Tamayo Architects

John Hardiman
Upper East Side Resident

James Romer
Upper East Side Resident

Aster Monell
Upper East Side Resident

Clark Monell
Upper East Side Resident

Barbara Xavier
Historic Districts Council

Michelle Birnbaum, President
Historic Park Avenue

Latha Thompson, District Manager
Manhattan Community Board 8

Jennifer Powers
Upper East Side Resident

Mary Dierickx
Historic Preservationist

Margot Monico, President
1040 Park Avenue

Tara Kelly, Executive Director
Friends of the Upper East Side
Historic Districts

Lo Van de Valk, President
Carnegie Hill Neighbors

Jane Cranston
Park Avenue Resident

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning everyone.

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My name is Peter Koo. I'm the Chair of the

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Subcommittee of Landmarks and Public Siting and

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Maritime Use. Today, we going to do --

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LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic]

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, today we are

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going to discuss Land Use Siting No. 100 Park Avenue

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Historic District. We want to acknowledge the

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presence of the following Council Members. Chairman

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David Greenfield of the Land Use Committee and

12

Council Member Garodnick, Council Member Annabel

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Palma, and Council Member Kallos, and Council Member

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Rosie Mendez. And we want to start with Landmark LPC

15

calling Joni Fernandez and Mary Dierickx for

16

testimony.

17

[Pause]

18

JONI FERNANDEZ: Good morning Council

19

Members. Hi, how are you? My name is Joni

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Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and

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Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation

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Commission. I'm here today to testify on the

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Commission's designation of the Park Avenue Historic

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District in Manhattan. On February 11, 2014, the

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Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public

2 hearing on the proposed designation of the Park
3 Avenue Historic District. Sixty-five people spoke in
4 favor of designation including representatives like
5 Council Member Daniel Garodnick, Council Member Ben
6 Kallos, State Senator Liz Kruger, and Congresswoman
7 Carolyn Maloney, as well as the American Institute of
8 Architects, Carnegie Hill Neighbors, Defenders of the
9 Historic Upper East Side, East 83rd-84th Street Black
10 Association, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic
11 Districts, Historic Districts Council, Historic Park
12 Avenue, Manhattan Community Board 8, Manhattan
13 Community Board 11, the New York Landmarks
14 Conservancy, Preservation of Historic Park Avenue,
15 the Society for the Preservation of the City, and
16 Congregation Da'at Elohim. A representative of the
17 Archdiocese of New York spoke in favor of
18 designation, but asked that the district exclude
19 buildings owned by the Church of St. Ignatius of
20 Loyola. Three representatives of the Park Avenue
21 Christian Church spoke in favor of designation, and
22 asked that the church annexed at 1010 Park Avenue be
23 identified as having no architectural style, and that
24 the congregation be allowed to develop this property.

2 A representative of the Jewish Community
3 Relations Council also spoke in support of
4 designation, and asked that the Park Avenue Christian
5 Church be allowed to replace the annex with a new
6 building. One person testified in opposition to
7 designation of the district, a representative of the
8 Real Estate Board of New York. The Commission
9 received approximately 370 letters in support of
10 designation. The owners of 1036 Park Avenue and 1125
11 Park Avenue requested that their buildings be
12 excluded from the District.

13 The Commission has also received six
14 letters in support of, including Hunter College
15 Campus High School Building at 1200 Park Avenue in
16 the proposed district. And two letters asking that
17 it be excluded. The Commission noticed that during
18 the course of consideration of landmarking the
19 proposed Park Avenue Historic District, some people
20 have expressed their opinions and other ones who have
21 various forms of media.

22 On April 29, 2014, the Commission voted
23 to designate the Park Avenue Historic District. The
24 approved Historic District boundaries excluded the
25 northern most portion of the calendared [sic]

3 Historic District due to the interruption of the
4 landscape and typography [sic] presented by the
5 Hunter College High School Building built in 1967 and
6 '71. In addition, the Church of St. Ignatius of
7 Loyola School Building was excluded from the district
8 boundaries because it was originally calendared as
9 part of the contiguous block and a lot of the church.

10 Located on Manhattan's Upper East Side,
11 the Park Avenue Historic District contains
12 approximately 64 buildings and extends from the
13 northeast corner of 79th Street to 91st Street. This
14 broad thoroughfare is distinguished by greater than
15 average width and landscaped malls that divide the
16 avenue in multiple lanes of north and southbound
17 automobile traffic. These features, which
18 accommodate the commuter railroad that travels below
19 the surface gives this and other stretches of Park
20 Avenue a unique appearance and character contributing
21 to its identity as premier residential address.

22 Laid out in the Commissioner's Plan of
23 1811 of Fourth Avenue it became the route of the New
24 York and Harlem Railroad in 1831 with double tracks
25 running down the center. During the mid 1870s as
part of the Fourth Avenue improvement, the tracks

3 were sunk below street level from 50th Street and
4 96th and covered. To disguise the frequent
5 installation of these essential railroads, there was
6 unstopped landscape. These malls, which were
7 narrowed considerably by the early 1930s are one of
8 the District's most distinctive features.

9 In the late 1880s, all of Fourth Avenue
10 became officially known as Park Avenue attracting
11 construction of row houses and small apartment
12 buildings. Among these structures only a small
13 number of examples survived such as the Renaissance
14 Revival apartment building at 957 Park Avenue. In
15 1903, following one of the City's railroad accidents,
16 the New York State Legislature advanced banned steam
17 locomotives in Manhattan. Electricity would quickly
18 reform Park Avenue making it attractive to upscale
19 residential development.

20 Though for a brief time large private
21 residences such as Reginald and Anna Dekoven and
22 Louis Gouveneur and Anna Bailey houses, both New York
23 City landmarks, were built, the vast majority of
24 buildings were speculative apartment houses. The
25 early high-rise in the district of 925 Park Avenue
designed by Delano and Aldrich in 1907-08 at the

3 northeast corner of 80th street. Many subsequent
4 buildings would follow this model adopting tasteful
5 variances of classical style including Renaissance
6 Revival, Georgian Revival, and Colonial Revival.
7 These buildings were by well-known apartment house
8 designers, including Schwartz & Gross, George
9 Pelham, George & Edward Blum, and Rosario Candella.
10 The largest number dates to 1924, when
11 approximately seven buildings were completed. Many
12 were designed with Medieval Revival style ornament,
13 particularly in the late 1920s when a new Multiple
14 Dwellings Law was passed, encouraging setbacks
15 which were frequently used as private terraces and
16 penthouses. The district also contains two church
17 complexes: St. Ignatius Loyola, a New York City
18 Landmark, and the Park Avenue Christian Church,
19 originally the South Reformed Dutch Church.

20 Following the end of the Second World
21 War, four modern-style apartment buildings were
22 erected. These structures maintain the avenue's
23 signature street wall, while incorporating such mid-
24 20th century modern features as ceramic panels and
25 travertine marble. Despite examples of recent
construction and window replacements, like Carnegie

2 Hill Historic Districts which it adjoins and
3 extends, this boulevard remains one of New York
4 City's best known and most recognizable residential
5 corridors. The Commissioner urges you to approve
6 this designation.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member

8 Garodnick, do you want to make a statement?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very
10 much, Chair Koo and Chair Greenfield for considering
11 the expansion of the Park Avenue Historic Districts
12 there. I also want to thank the Landmarks Commission
13 for their testimony. Of course, this application is
14 the result of years of work by many advocates and
15 community groups some of whom were here today. And I
16 wanted to thank them for their extraordinary
17 advocacy. It has been impressive. It has been
18 consistent, and I hope and expect that you will have
19 something to celebrate as a result of this process.
20 The new Historic District will include 79th to 91st
21 Street along Park Avenue. Many of the buildings
22 along Park Avenue were designed extemporaneously by a
23 small group of architects in the 1920s and share a
24 cultural as well as architectural history.

2 Park Avenue, as we all know, has a
3 distinct sense of place. It is one of our City's
4 most recognizable boulevards. Unfortunately, without
5 historic district designation here, many significant
6 buildings could be lost to demolition or long-term
7 incremental changes. We've already seen a number of
8 buildings torn down or changed, which, of course, has
9 a damaging qualitative effect on the entire
10 streetscape.

11 By expanding the Historic District, any
12 proposal for changes would be subject to a process
13 that will allow for the necessary time to review the
14 changes, and ensure that additions or alterations are
15 contextually appropriate. And I look forward to
16 hearing the testimony today, but I certainly wanted
17 to express my support for this, and my appreciation
18 for those who have pushed it for years. And I thank
19 you, and many of my constituents also thank you for
20 what you have done on their behalf. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Kallos,
22 do you have a statement?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you to the
24 Landmarks Chair Peter Koo as well as to the Land Use
25 Chair David Greenfield, and to the Landmarks

2 Preservation Commission. Park Avenue is one of New
3 York City's most significant cultural and historical
4 locations. The 68 buildings spanning 79th to 96th
5 Street were designed by the same group of architects
6 in the early 20th Century style as buildings in the
7 existing Historic District. Without inclusion in the
8 Historic District new development would alter the
9 neighborhood's landscape and character. Our
10 community has already lost five of these buildings.
11 And without inclusion in the existing Historic
12 District, are at risk of seeing more being demolished
13 and replaced. It is important that we protect these
14 buildings while respecting the beauty and history of
15 Park Avenue. I am pleased that the Landmarks
16 Preservation Commission has now ruled for their
17 inclusion.

18 I'd like to thank my colleague in the
19 Council Dan Garodnick for his work on this issue, as
20 well as Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, State Senator
21 Liz Kruger, Assembly Member Dan Quart, and members of
22 Community Board 8 here with us today, as well as who
23 serve on it in general. I would also like to extend
24 my thanks to Friends of the Upper East Side, and
25

2 Executive Director Tara Kelly for all their hard work
3 and dedication to preserving this neighborhood.

4 Lastly, I'd urge everyone once this is
5 passed to please look east into my district. I am
6 particularly jealous that Council Member Garodnick is
7 getting this done. And I'm hoping that we can see
8 similar historic buildings in Council District 5 in
9 the New York borough neighborhood also receive the
10 same recognition. So thank you for all of your help,
11 and I urge all of my colleagues to please vote yes.

12 [Pause]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: One last piece.
14 I just would like to acknowledge two of my summer
15 interns. I'd like to thank them for their summer
16 service Katherine Fidus [SP?] and Damae Vucho
17 Convatano [sp?] Thank you. You are now in the
18 public record.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Do we have
20 any questions from council members? No? Thank you
21 very much, Ms. Fernandez.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: We're going to move on to
23 the public testimony portion. We will call up panels
24 of four. Everyone who signed up is in favor
25 according to these sheets. So it will be panels of

2 four with a two-minute time clock. Tricia Shimamura
3 [sp?] from Congresswoman Maloney's Office, Marco
4 Tamayo, James Romer [sc] and John Hardiman. If you
5 pick the order in which you're going to speak.
6 Identify yourself when you begin speaking.

7 [Pause]

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: Press the light so the
9 red light is on.

10 TRICIA SHIMAMURA: Good afternoon. My
11 name is Tricia Shimamura, and I'm speaking on behalf
12 of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. She sends her
13 strong regards, and her strong support of the
14 decision before you today. I'm pleased to have-- and
15 I read on behalf of the Congresswoman. I am pleased
16 to have the opportunity to submit my testimony today
17 in strong support for the proposed Park Avenue
18 Historic District, which will cover the area along
19 Park Avenue from 79th Street to 91st Street. As you
20 know, this has already received enthusiastic support
21 from Community Board 8 for Landmarks Preservation
22 Commission and the City Planning Commission.

23 The proposed Historic District is one of
24 the most beautiful and architecturally significant
25 areas in the city. Park Avenue serves a boulevard

3 whose iconic apartment buildings herald the
4 transformation of city living from two to three-story
5 brownstones and tenements to grand apartments whose
6 large rooms and amenities changed the way New Yorkers
7 live. It is vitally important to maintain the
8 character of this truly significant urban landscape.

9 As you know, the architectural style of
10 the buildings along Park Avenue north of 79th Street
11 is very similar to those along Park Avenue. They're
12 included in the existing Upper East Side Historic
13 District below 79th Street, which was placed to the--
14 which was added to the National Register of Historic
15 Places in 2010. This district focuses on the
16 distinctive multi-family apartment buildings on the
17 attached map [sic]. These iconic buildings of divine
18 luxury. From 62nd to 91st Street these buildings are
19 aesthetically consistently. They strongly overlap in
20 height, form, design, and materials. Many of the
21 buildings are patterned after Italian Renaissance
22 buildings from the cascading terraces at 1100 Park
23 Avenue to the arched doorways and heavy roofline 903
24 Park Avenue. Classical architecture is incorporated
25 into many of the buildings' designs. Similarly,
architects borrowed literally from the Mesoamerican,

3 art deco, art nouveau, and Gothic designs to give
4 each building a unique bill. Also, creating a sense
5 of harmonious whole because of the similarities in
6 matching materials and height.

7 As is true for the Upper East Side
8 Historic District, many of the buildings are in the
9 proposed district are being considered that were
10 built in the 1910s and the 1920s by renowned
11 architects. Over the last century, these remarkable
12 buildings have largely maintained their structural
13 integrity and distinctive style. Landmark
14 Preservation would protect the extraordinary Park
15 Avenue historical landscape and continuity of
16 character. Thank you.

17 MARCO TAMAYO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
18 My name is Marco Tamayo. I'm a licensed architect
19 and resident of the Upper East Side and
20 representative of Tamayo Architects. I am speaking
21 in support of the Park Avenue proposed extension. I
22 believe this extension might maintain consistency and
23 continuity with the already section landmark.
24 Searching Park Avenue on Google Earth on the
25 traditional map and advising condition on a rapid
[sic] screen in the Upper East Side in the middle of

2 the playful and unspeaking geometric points of flat
3 roof water tanks buckling in some product leaks [sic]
4 that could distinguish Park Avenue. Park Avenue
5 changes have told solid, splendid and elegant
6 apartment building from 12 to 17 stories high, and a
7 few more of style are taller than this. It is easy
8 to distinguish it from the rest of the avenues, but
9 it is predominantly a wide site avenue, [sic] and for
10 this planter center mall. It is so wide that
11 representatives from the Building Zone are projecting
12 the road, and known on the building facades.

13 Plunging deep down on this avenue from
14 96th to 79th Street Park Avenue represents a huge
15 mass to the eye, and it is homogenous to the eye as a
16 whole and it is uninterrupted on the east side of the
17 avenue by three building that are four or five
18 stories from the 19th Century. But it is efficient
19 by the perpendicular street and by a few alleys.
20 [sic] With light eclectic architectural style this
21 time with a severity of full elegance, and that bring
22 us into styles of the day predominantly Italian,
23 through Georgia, through art deco. A great city like
24 New York always are insisting on this process of

2 growing and continuation and for that, they
3 incorporate the cities.

4 Unlike two parallel avenues Lexington and
5 Madison, Park Avenue has always been a traditional
6 rectangular of the 25 or 100 lots per block[sic] to
7 the larger ones creating two or more per lot per
8 block. This melting and changes consistent feeling
9 and creating that unique lasting impression.

10 So far, Park Avenue has erected and
11 maintained its architecture with its some scar like
12 the senseless repair of the southeast wall at 903
13 Park Avenue. With the scarred ones from the chapel
14 [bell] it is full to its bottom, which is visible as
15 far as the corner of 79th Street and Second Avenue.
16 Even though this could even be worse with average or
17 lesser value architectural styles or other operations
18 that may affect the personal styles. In conclusion,
19 I should say, our ancestors have beautiful, unique,
20 elegant, and solid architectural styles. But our
21 future generation could come either decadent
22 Renaissance architectural styles for the scars or
23 unprotected styles, or replaced by edifices with
24 average or lesser architectural value to diminish its
25

2 opulence and lessen the sections along with all
3 business forward. [sic] Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

5 JOHN HARDIMAN: Thank you, Chairman Koo.

6 Thank you members of the Subcommittee, Councilman
7 Garodnick and thank you to Michelle Birnbaum and her
8 organization for all the hard work that they've done
9 over the years for this historic district. I'm John
10 Hardiman. I live in the District. I speak on behalf
11 of a number of my friends and neighbors who
12 wholeheartedly support the designation of the
13 district, which includes many beautiful and
14 architecturally significant buildings, including the
15 Park Avenue Christian Church and Parish House site
16 between 84th and 85th Street.

17 A stroll up and down Park Avenue will
18 show that this area that's being designated today has
19 been compromised in a way by development that the
20 rest of the parts of Park Avenue that have had
21 protection for a while have not been. And so, this
22 designation, and all of you and those who live in the
23 neighborhood, can't come soon enough. Thank you very
24 much.

3 JAMES ROMER: My name is James Romer.

4 I'm a resident of the Upper East Side as well, and
5 I've brought with me a proxy from my neighbor who has
6 written a letter to the Chairman. So I first let me
7 say thank you, Chairman, for letting us have the
8 opportunity to speak here today, and to the rest of
9 the committee as well.

10 Dear Chairman, I'm writing to ask you to
11 please preserve the distinct sense of place of this
12 important and unique stretch of Park Avenue, and the
13 continuation of the already recognized Park Avenue
14 Historic District between 67th and 79th Streets.
15 Noise, dirt, and train vibrations were once the
16 center of the street, but when the steam engines were
17 banned in the very early 1900s a garden was overlaid
18 on the Grand Central tracks, and Park Avenue as we
19 know it was born. Slowly, the avenue was
20 thoughtfully lined with residential buildings of a
21 similar height and topped with cornices punctuated by
22 a few low-rise buildings creating an elegant
23 architectural progression.

24 All facades face were anchored by the
25 newly created verdant and seasonally changing median
of trees and plantings. This avenue, Park Avenue,

2 has become world-renowned. However, yet unprotected
3 by the city, too many of these historic and beautiful
4 buildings, part of an ensemble and sense of place,
5 were lost to further less thoughtful development.
6 Within the area currently being considered for
7 protection, five historic buildings disappeared even
8 since the RFB was filed in 2010. Designating the
9 district now would prevent further loss of its
10 history and architecture. We urge you and your
11 committee to secure and protect the remaining part of
12 this stately oasis, and ask that Park Avenue from
13 79th to 94th Street be declared as a historic
14 district. Thank you. Aaron Rowan.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next up we have Aster
16 Monell, Clark Monell, Barbara Xavier, and Elizabeth
17 Ashby.

18 ASTER MONELL: [off mic] Oh, I'm sorry,
19 my name is Aster Monell. I also live in the Historic
20 District, and I'm here to read a letter from Kathy
21 Jolowitz, East 83rd, East 81st Street Block
22 Association President and Yorkville Historian.

23 Dear City Council Members, I write this
24 letter for two reasons. The first is the capacity as
25 a Yorkville Historian, the second is as President and

2 Founding Member of based 83rd and 84th Block
3 Association, a 41-year-old 16-block association whose
4 boundaries reach from 2nd to 5th Avenue. Born and
5 schooled in Yorkville, I've watched how this
6 neighborhood once an internationally famous landmark
7 in our corner of the city virtually disappear. Thus,
8 having preserved it in a large exhibit and
9 researching its involvement for a book, I have
10 learned of Park Avenue's rich architectural history.

11 My chapter about the growth of Park
12 Avenue through the ages, although not the historic
13 Yorkville, but as the Upper East Side, it is
14 nevertheless considered one neighborhood. In the
15 1800s, Park Avenue was a mere path through the east
16 90s, 80s, 70s that led to the slaughter houses in the
17 east 60s, much to the unpleasant sounds for the
18 inhabitants of the new built villas. It later became
19 a route for transportation to the developing little
20 hamlet of Yorkville transforming later to an
21 underground railway. It became separate from the
22 working class housing, and transformed into an upper
23 class strip of the Upper East Side. No longer a
24 place for villas, New York architectural design
25 transformed into a row of multi-faceted apartment

2 buildings each with their own distinction, ultimately
3 forming a uniform boulevard with a long parkline.
4 [sic]

5 As President of the Block Association,
6 I've watched my neighborhood transform from a small
7 family community to what has become now an
8 unconnected neighborhood. Developers have displaced
9 those families who gave Yorkville its prominence and
10 providence by demolishing their homes and businesses,
11 rebuilding new housing with little respect to what
12 was built in this last era. But Park Avenue has
13 maintained its architectural providence. It is a
14 path to be admired today. However, developers who
15 have more interest in [bell] profit alone and little
16 or no interest in the profit with preservation, now
17 look to slowly destroy. Thus, I urge you to vote to
18 the landmarking of Park Avenue from 79th Street 91st
19 Street. I would hope your vote would be anti-
20 preservationists on notice. Sincerely, Kathy
21 Jolowitz.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Next.

23 CLARK MONELL: Good morning. My name is
24 Clark. I'm a resident of the Upper East Side.

25 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Can you hold on?

2 CLARK MONELL: Of course, yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] We want to
4 announce the presence of our Council Member Arroyo.
5 Now, you can start.

6 CLARK MONELL: Okay. Hello, my name is
7 Clark Monell. I'm a resident of the Upper East Side.
8 Thank you Chairman Koo, and members of the Landmark
9 Subcommittee for the opportunity to speak on behalf
10 of the new Park Avenue Historic District. On behalf
11 of a great many residents, I would like to express my
12 support for the district, and I would like to also
13 hope that it will serve to protect the area's unique
14 character in history.

15 The District includes a number of
16 architectural and historically significant buildings
17 like the Park Avenue Christian Church Complex between
18 84th and 85th Street, which has been recognized as an
19 outstanding example of Gothic Revival architecture.
20 The designation of the Park Avenue District will
21 ensure that its architecturally significant buildings
22 like the Park Avenue Christian Church Complex will be
23 preserved and protected. And that there will be an
24 opportunity for public and LPC review and oversight
25 for proposed development therein. I urge your

2 approval of the new district in its entirety. Thank
3 you very much.

4 [Pause]

5 BARBARA XAVIER: Good morning, Council
6 Members. Barbara Xavier, Historic Districts Council.
7 We are thrilled to testify today before the City
8 Council and the Landmarks Preservation Commission's
9 designation of the Park Avenue from 79th Street
10 through 91st Street as a New York Historic District.
11 HDC strongly supports this designation and would like
12 to take this opportunity to respond to claims by the
13 Real Estate Board of New York and others that much of
14 the proposed district is non-contributing. Why would
15 a circa 1895 Renaissance Revival style tenement
16 building like 957 Park Avenue be inconsequential when
17 it speaks to the early residential development of the
18 area? Or the 1882 Parish House in circa 1899 School
19 of St. Ignatius Loyola, which were built for the
20 growing community, and have continued to serve it for
21 over a century.

22 Post-World War II buildings like 920 Park
23 Avenue, one of the earliest Wrightwood [sic]
24 apartment buildings in the city show the avenue's
25 staying power as a desirable residential street. To

3 say that these buildings do not contribute to the
4 Historic District that they do not help to more fully
5 paint the picture of Park Avenue is greatly wrong.
6 Similarly, we profoundly regret to RFPs [sic] to list
7 the former rectory of the Park Avenue Christian
8 Church as no style.

9 The existing configuration is sensitive
10 to and applauds Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's original
11 vision for the church complex. Like others, he
12 designed such a simple building such as St. Thomas
13 Churches. The vertical elements of the church are
14 allowed to soar with the help of lower adjacent
15 structures creating a transition from the church to
16 the growing city echoing an intention of a more
17 modestly, other landmark ecclesiastical campuses such
18 as the General Theological Seminary. This deliberate
19 hierarchy of form allows the church to be viewed on
20 all four sides and makes the impressive architecture
21 all the more so. And we will continue to urge the
22 Landmarks Commission to consider this when
23 contemplating development on the site.

24 HDC strongly supports the Landmarks
25 Preservation Commission's action in protecting and
preserving this section of this grand boulevard in

2 order to more fully tell and protect the story of
3 this notable avenue and New York City. Thank you.

4 [Pause]

5 ELIZABETH ASHBY: [off mic] Thank you
6 very much for this. Can you hear me? Hello. Thanks
7 very much for hearing this. I am here representing
8 Defenders of the Historic Upper East Side and the
9 Historic Neighborhood Enhancement Alliance. And
10 we've been working constantly for 12 years to get
11 this designation. So, as you can imagine we
12 certainly support it. Park Avenue is, and has
13 already made the case that it is an architectural
14 historic district. You walk up and down it and you
15 know that it is a landscape historic district. And
16 more importantly, it's a cultural historic district.
17 I think it's the only historic-- really the only
18 historic district whose residential avenue is world
19 famous here. People have heard of it in Paris and
20 Budapest. And we've designated all the things like
21 West End Avenue, very worthy, but nobody has heard of
22 it in Duluth. And I think that this proves its case.
23 And is now know worldwide as a very elegant
24 residential street.

3 In 1927, the New Republic reported that
4 Park Avenue, quote "Is the end of the American ladder
5 of success. Higher one cannot go." It wasn't always
6 so. Actually, it was once known as the street where
7 bad girls worked with dogs. But once the elegant
8 apartment buildings came along, it became the street,
9 which we know now. And it's worthy of designation
10 every single bit of it except for one building that
11 was recently built on a site that should not have
12 been torn down. And you wouldn't have let it be torn
13 down. And an eye sore is there. I won't mention it.
14 I don't want to be sued, but every bit else is worthy
15 of protection, and we certainly look forward to your
16 vote. Thank you.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: The next panel of four is
18 Latha Thompson, Mary Dierickx, Michelle Birnbaum,
19 Jennifer Powers.

20 [Pause]

21 MICHELLE BIRNBAUM: I'm Michelle
22 Birnbaum, President of Historic Park Avenue. Thank
23 you very much Chairs Koo and Greenfield for hearing
24 my testimony today. I'm Michelle Birnbaum, President
25 of Historic Park Avenue, an organization formed for
the purpose of including Park Avenue from 79th to

3 96th Street in a Historic District. Historic Park
4 Avenue filed an RFP with the Landlords' Preservation
5 Commission for Park Avenue from 79th to 86th in 2010.
6 At the same time, Carnegie Hill Neighbors filed and
7 RFP for those streets on Park Avenue from 86th to
8 96th that are not already included in the Carnegie
9 Hill Historic District.

10 We were successful in having Park Avenue
11 listed on the State and National Registered of
12 Historic Places, thus affirming that Park Avenue is
13 an iconic street with outstanding, primarily pre-war
14 residential and institutional buildings that were
15 designed by the most respected architects of the day.

16 Historic Park Avenue's ongoing mission
17 will be to protect and preserve the mall and the
18 properties along this avenue, and is proud for Park
19 Avenue to have been chosen this year as one of
20 Historic District's Council 6 to celebrate. The
21 argument for the historic importance of the avenue
22 and the buildings has been made by others, and will
23 be made by Mary Dierickx, our Preservation
24 Consultant, and has been made by prominent
25 architects, historians whose letters are in the
Landmarks Preservation Commission's record.

2 Also, in that record, and here's a whole
3 bunch of them, a partial bunch, are letters and
4 petitions showing overwhelming support from friends,
5 Park Avenue residents, preservation groups, elected
6 officials, block associations, and our Community
7 Board, which has also been the recipient of hundreds
8 of letters of support. And has passed two resolutions
9 to that effect. Over a thousand people have signed
10 petitions.

11 We also have the support of those
12 existing historic-- those in the existing Historic
13 District on Park Avenue from 62nd to 79th, and these
14 streets north of 79th have their shared history of
15 the railroad and the world renowned architects, who
16 designed beautiful buildings reflective of their time
17 with interiors that fulfilled the requirements of
18 their occupants. Often in an advertisement for the
19 sale of a building and apartment, a developer will
20 state "in an historic district" as a selling point.

21 Experience says that this adds a special
22 element to a property, which suggests respect,
23 prestige, and protection. We are temporary stewards
24 of this property. I want there to be oversight by
25 those who, and have input by those who are

2 knowledgeable and have historic perspective. So as
3 advised by Landmarks Preservation Commission and the
4 City Planning Commission, we must preserve and
5 protect. And I ask you kindly to please uphold that
6 position and grant Historic District status. Thank
7 you.

8 LATHA THOMPSON: Good afternoon. My name
9 is Latha Thompson. I'm the District Manager of
10 Manhattan Community Board 8. Good afternoon,
11 Chairman Koo and Council members. Thank you for
12 hearing my testimony today. My name is Latha and
13 again, I am the District Manager for Manhattan
14 Community Board 8. In these boundaries by the
15 proposed Historic District for Park Avenue from 79th
16 to 91st Street. The existing Historic District,
17 which includes Park Avenue from 62nd Street to the
18 south side of 79th Street is also within my district
19 as is Carnegie Hill Historic District.

20 Community Board 8 strongly supports the
21 creation of this new historic district, and our
22 Community Board has passed two resolutions to that
23 effect, one in 2006, another in 2008. We have
24 submitted this testimony and our resolutions to the
25 Landmarks Preservation Commission. But I want to

2 affirm the position of Community Board 8 today, and
3 affirm our strong support for the inclusion into the
4 Historic District Park Avenue from 79th to 91st
5 Streets. Please vote to support the recommendation
6 of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the
7 City Planning Commission to include these streets,
8 Park Avenue from 79th to 91st Street in the Historic
9 District. I have attached copies of our resolutions
10 and thank you again.

11 [Pause]

12 JENNIFER POWERS: Good morning. My name
13 is Jennifer Powers. I live on the Upper East Side.
14 Thank you for your time today. Dear City Council
15 Members, As a long-time resident of New York City on
16 the Upper East Side, I encourage and urge the City
17 and the Council to support the designation of
18 Historic District status from 79th Street and Park to
19 91st and Park as proposed by the Landmarks
20 Preservation Commission and the City Planning
21 Commission.

22 Today's decision is critical to the
23 history and iconography of our neighborhood. Park
24 Avenue reflects and represents the finest buildings,
25 architecture, and architects of the 20th Century

2 depicting an elegant and unified boulevard on par
3 with other historic streets such as Avenue in Posh
4 [sic] in Paris, Eaton Square in London, and our very
5 own 5th Avenue in New York. The harmonious blending
6 of the City's historic aesthetic and cultural
7 heritage is a vital part of New York City on a daily
8 basis. We must ensure to protect that vitality for
9 future generations.

10 I wholeheartedly support the proposal
11 recommend by Landmarks to declare Park Avenue from
12 79th Street to 91st Street a historic district.
13 Already Park Avenue below 79th Street has received
14 Historic District status. The area above 79th Street
15 has earned its place of designation meeting the same
16 criteria and standards of historical and
17 architectural relevance. It mirrors the vision of
18 Park Avenue as a whole.

19 Having lived in the neighborhood for over
20 20 years, I support the recommendation of Historic
21 District status. We would be remiss to leave out
22 such an integral part of Park Avenue. We must
23 preserve and protect our neighborhood, our city, our
24 past, and our future. You can only do it once. I
25 implore the Council Members and the Committee to

2 approve this designation of Historic District status
3 to Park Avenue from 79th Street to 91st Street.

4 Let's make today count. I look forward to a positive
5 outcome and Historic District status for Park Avenue
6 from 79th Street to 91st Street. With great
7 appreciation and respect for your service to New
8 York, thank you in advance for your time and
9 consideration.

10 MARY DIERICKX: Good morning, Chairman
11 Koo and Council Members, Committee Members. My name
12 is Mary Dierickx. I'm a Historic Preservation
13 Consultant representing Historic Park Avenue. I've
14 been working with Historic Park Avenue and with
15 Carnegie Hill Neighbors on the Park Avenue Historic
16 District for many years. And as Michelle mentioned,
17 Park Avenue was recognized as an historic district by
18 the International Register of Historic Places in
19 2010. The Park Avenue District is significant for
20 its architecture and its history and sense of place.
21 I'm going to say again that Park Avenue was laid out
22 with unusual width to accommodate at grade railroad
23 tracks. A tunnel was built in 1877 from 59th to 97th
24 and planted median was created. It was expanded when
25 trains were electrified in 1902 creating the elegant

3 boulevard we know today, and which is instantly
4 recognizable around the world.

5 The reason people are continually bring
6 this up is because this is what makes Park Avenue
7 separate as a historic district rather than part of
8 the-- It makes it unique, rather than part of the
9 neighborhood or part of the wider historic district.
10 It stands on its own because of its history and its
11 sense of place. It also helps us understand the
12 early 19th-- The 19th and early 20th Century urban
13 accommodation for public transportation. It's an
14 unusually fine method, the boulevards.

15 It's a repository of some of the finest
16 early 20th Century apartment and institutional
17 buildings in the city. It's lined with remarkably
18 intact apartment buildings by the famous architects
19 you've heard before. But these exceptionally
20 significant institutional buildings and townhouses,
21 some of which were already New York City individual
22 landmarks, were and are integral to the district.
23 This district has the same history, the same
24 architecture as the part of Park Avenue and the Upper
25 East Side and in Carnegie Hill. And it deserves

3 protection, [bell] and urge you to support the
4 district. Thank you.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Our next panel is Margot
6 Monica, Tara Kelly, Lo Van Der Valk, and Jane
7 Cranston.

8 [Pause]

9 MARGOT MONICA: My name is Margot Monica,
10 and I think Chairman Koo and the Council Members for
11 this opportunity to talk to you. My support for the
12 Park Avenue Historic District stems from my strong
13 desire both as a resident of more than 45 years and
14 as the Vice President of 1040 Park Avenue. I have
15 served on the board for more than three decades in
16 various capacities, and I am, therefore, very
17 familiar with the strong feeling in the building to
18 preserve the integrity of the original building as
19 designed by the highly respected architects Delano
20 and Aldrich.

21 Let me tell you about some of the
22 architectural details, which are unique to 1040.
23 There is frieze depicting the Tortoise and the Hare
24 on both the Park Avenue and 86th Street side on the
25 third floor. This frieze is shown in city park tours
as it is unique. The board has, therefore, never

2 permitted any through-the-wall air conditioners below
3 the fifth floor in order to preserve the frieze.

4 There are also two narrow balconies on the 14th floor
5 on both Park Avenue and 86th Street, which we have
6 preserved as well as the round windows on the corners
7 of the same floor. Some of this preservation has
8 been costly, but the board has insisted on it. We
9 have also replaced all the wooden framed windows with
10 identical windows with oxidized metal frames to
11 simulate the original windows. No deviances are
12 permitted.

13 On behalf of the board and the tenants, I
14 urge you to grant landmark status to this area. We
15 believe the present beauty of the building should be
16 preserved for future generations. Thank you for your
17 consideration.

18 [Pause]

19 TARA KELLY: Good morning, Chair Koo and
20 Council Members. Thank you for hearing our testimony
21 this morning. I'm Tara Kelly, Executive Director of
22 Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts.
23 Friends is grateful to the Landmarks Preservation
24 Commission for the designation of the Park Avenue
25 Historic District. This section from 79th to 91st

3 Streets is in keeping with the character of the other
4 designated portions of Park Avenue on the Upper East
5 Side and in Carnegie Hill with its large residential
6 apartment buildings constructed in the early 20th
7 Century as well as many low-rise 19th Century
8 structures.

9 Since the original request for evaluation
10 was submitted in 2010, five historic buildings
11 between 79th and 91st Streets have been lost. The
12 Park Avenue Christian Church Parish House, located
13 within the limits of this district is now threatened
14 with the same fate. The Parish House is regrettably
15 the most vulnerable by a no-style characterization by
16 the on the designation [sic] report. This important
17 stretch of Park Avenue, along with the Park Avenue
18 Christian Church and Parish House richly deserve the
19 permanent protection that is offered by the landmark
20 designation. Thus, we ask the Council to act with
21 all possible speed to ensure that these historic
22 buildings are preserved. Thank you.

23 [Pause]

24 LO VAN DER VALK: Good morning. My name
25 is Lo Van der Valk. I represent Carnegie Hill
Neighbors as President. I want to thank you, Chair

2 Koo, and members of this committee to allow us to
3 testify. Carnegie Hill Neighbors is a civic
4 organization founded in 1970 to support historic
5 preservation and the quality of life initiatives in
6 our community. Which is bounded by 86th and 98th
7 Streets, and 5th to 3rd Avenues. Together with
8 Historic Park Avenue and Defenders of the Historic
9 Upper East Side, we have many years worked for this
10 designation. In 2009, we started a process to obtain
11 a listing on the National Register for Park Avenue
12 from 79th to 96th Streets. And that listing was
13 granted in 2010. That same year, we applied to the
14 LBC submitting two separate requests for evaluation
15 prepared by Mary Dierickx, who spoke earlier. One
16 for the Park Avenue block south of 86th, and the
17 other for the blocks north of 86th Street in the
18 Carnegie Hill portion.

19 The designation before you is of enhanced
20 importance because it fills a long missing gap in
21 historic section, for the residential section of Park
22 Avenue, which together with 5th Avenue represents New
23 York's premier residential boulevard recognized the
24 world over. In the attached LPC map, that we're all
25 familiar proposes a 12-block designation from 79th to

3 91st Street, which will join the two already
4 designated sections of Park Avenue from 62nd and 63rd
5 Street to 79th Street [bell] and the Upper East--
6 Does goes fast. So this gap is being filled, and
7 it's important that it is filled.

8 Enough has been said about the iconic
9 character of Park Avenue known the world over and the
10 special wide boulevard that was allowed by filling
11 over the railroad tracks when they were electrified.
12 So we urge you to designate this, and we also thank a
13 lot of groups that have spoken here, and we thank
14 Council Member Dan Garodnick for being such a great
15 intercessor on our behalf. And we thank the
16 Landmarks Commission for taking this on. Because
17 having something than better than having-- than not
18 having everything, and we recognize that. But we
19 think that there are some further clarifications to
20 be made, and we will participate in those
21 discussions. So thank you very much and we hope for
22 approval.

23 JANE CRANSTON: Good morning and thank
24 you Mr. Commissioner and thank you to the Commission.
25 I'm Jane Cranston, and I have lived on Park Avenue
more than 25 years. I lived with my husband, my late

2 husband and he lived there more than 40 years. Park
3 Avenue one of the grand, grand thoroughfares in the
4 world. Everyone knows us by it. It's the first
5 photo that tourists take when they get off the 4, 5,
6 or 6 trains or headed towards the Met or headed
7 towards the Guggenheim. They marvel at the fact that
8 people actually live in Manhattan, and that we've
9 preserved that. And that they can see the fact that
10 this is what New York looked like for many, many
11 years. I'm not sure whether it was neglect,
12 ambivalence, greed, misconceptions that took us this
13 long to have this discussion.

14 People have been working on it, but
15 somehow we've fallen through the cracks. What I'm
16 saying I don't know why, but I think you know why, we
17 should do it now. Now is the time. Now is the time
18 to preserve this grand thoroughfare, and I ask your
19 help. Thank you.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Next up we have Paul
21 Silver and Melissa Little. Is there anyone else who
22 wishes to testify whose name has not been called?

23 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic]

24 [Pause]

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Is there anyone in the
3 room who wishes to testify on Land Use 100 whose name
4 has not been called. Okay, that will close the
5 public hearing on Land Use Number 100.

6 [Pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member
8 Garodnick, if you want to make a statement.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very
10 much Chair Koo, and again I want to express my
11 appreciation to you for holding this hearing today.
12 As has been noted by a number of the witnesses, this
13 is a project and designation that has been
14 contemplated for a long while. So I know that it
15 will be with great satisfaction that this is approved
16 today by this Committee. I wanted to be very clear
17 with my colleagues that I support this designation,
18 and that although I'm not a member of this
19 subcommittee would be voting yes if I were a member
20 of this subcommittee. And I would like to encourage
21 you to do the same, and I look forward to having the
22 honor of voting to support this designation when it
23 comes to the full Land Use Committee. Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Counsel
3 will call a vote, please.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: On a vote to approve Land
5 Use Number 100, Park Avenue Historic District, Chair
6 Koo.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Arroyo.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Yes.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Mendez.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yes.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I'm honored to
14 vote yes.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of four in the
16 affirmative and zero abstentions and no negatives
17 Land Use Item Number 100 is approved and referred to
18 the Full Land Use Committee.

19 [Pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Meeting is adjourned.

21 [gavel]

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS,
PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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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 July 30, 2014