

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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January 13, 2015
Start: 11:55 a.m.
Recess: 12:21 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
Corey D. Johnson

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

Jenny Fernandez

Director

Intergovernmental and Community Relations

Landmarks Preservation Commission

Jacqueline Berkowitz

Member

Town and Village Synagogue

2 [background comments]

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay. Hi... Good
4 morning. I'm Council Member Peter Koo; I'm the Chair
5 of the Subcommittee of Landmarks, Public Siting and
6 Maritime Uses. Today we are joined by Council
7 Members Palma, Arroyo, Mendez, Council Member Barron
8 and Council Member Kallos. The meeting is [gavel]
9 starting now [sic].

10 The first item we're gonna do is LU 0158,
11 Application No. 20155247 PNK in Council Member
12 Menchaca's district. I'm calling for a vote on the
13 Motion to File LU 0158, the South Brooklyn Marine
14 Terminal Lease Application. This application was
15 withdrawn by the Mayor on January 7, 2015. I make
16 this motion to file pursuant to Council Rules to
17 remove this item from our calendar, so I'm asking the
18 Counsel to call vote.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Palma.

22 [background comments]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Yes.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
25 Arroyo.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Yeah, okay.

3 [laughter]

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
5 Mendez.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
8 Barron.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
11 Kallos.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye, with
13 congratulations to Council Member Menchaca.

14 [background comment]

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: 'Kay, Land Use No.
16 0158, a Motion to File, is approved with... [interpose,
17 background comments] with 6 votes in favor, 0 against
18 and 0 abstaining.

19 [background comments]

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Should we do this one
21 by one or?

22 [background comment]

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: The next item on our
24 calendar is Land Use 0166, Application No. 20155174
25 HKK, which is the Doering Bohack House in Council

2 Member Reynoso's district. We have Jenny Fernandez
3 from CPC here to testify.

4 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Good morning Chair Koo;
5 members of the Subcommittee. My name is Jenny
6 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and
7 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
8 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the
9 Commission's designation of the Doering Bohack House,
10 Brooklyn.

11 On June 25th, 2013 the Landmarks
12 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
13 proposed designation as a landmark of 1090 Green
14 Avenue, heard as the De Coudres Bohack House. There
15 were four speakers in favor of designation, including
16 a representative of Council Member Diana Reyna,
17 representatives of the Historic Districts Council,
18 the New York Landmarks Conservancy and the Victorian
19 Society of New York. There were no speakers in
20 opposition to the designation.

21 On August 25th, 2014 the Commission
22 received a letter in support of designation from
23 Council Member Antonio Reynoso. Another hearing was
24 held on October 29th, 2013, the House renamed the
25 Doering Bohack House, with no additional speakers

2 testifying at that hearing. On September 30th, 2014,
3 the Commission voted to designate the house a New
4 York City individual landmark.

5 Built around 1887 and moved to this site
6 in 1902, the Doering Bohack House is a rare surviving
7 example of an ornate, vernacular frame house style
8 popular in Bushwick in the 1880s and the 1890s and
9 designed by prominent Brooklyn architect Theobald
10 Engelhardt. The house was commissioned by Frederick
11 and Rosa T. Doering and in 1902 acquired by Henry C.
12 Bohack, a German immigrant and founder of the H.C.
13 Bohack & Company grocery store chain. Today the
14 house remains remarkably intact and is a significant
15 example of Bushwick's architectural heritage and
16 history. The Commission urges you to affirm this
17 designation.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any questions from our
19 members? [background comments] We are also happy to
20 be joined by Council Member Johnson. [background
21 comments] Anyone who wants to testify for this?
22 [background comments] No. So we close the public
23 hearing, seeing none.

24 The next item on the calendar is Land Use
25 No. 0167 (20155204 HKM), the First German Baptist

2 Church in Council Member Mendez' district. Jenny...

3 [crosstalk]

4 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair Koo.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

6 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Good morning Council
7 Members, once again. My name is Jenny Fernandez,
8 Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations
9 for the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here
10 today to testify on the Commission's designation of
11 the First German Baptist Church, later Congregation
12 Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue in
13 Manhattan.

14 On March 25th, 2014 the Landmarks
15 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the
16 proposed designation as a landmark of the First
17 German Baptist Church, later Ukrainian Autocephalic
18 Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr, later Congregation
19 Tifereth Israel Town and Village Synagogue. There
20 were 11 speakers in favor of designation, including
21 representatives of the New York Landmarks
22 Conservancy, The Greenwich Village Society for
23 Historic Preservation, Congregation Kehila Kedosha
24 Janina, the Historic Districts Council, the Lower
25 East Side Preservation Initiative and the East

2 Village Community Coalition. There were eight
3 speakers in opposition to designation, including the
4 President and Rabbi of the Town and Village Synagogue
5 and five members of the congregation. Several
6 members of the congregation testified in opposition
7 to designation, including the President and Chairman
8 of the Board of the synagogue and requested that if
9 the designation were to go forward that the rear
10 addition known as the back building be excluded from
11 the designation. At the hearing Chair Tierney read
12 into the record a letter from State Senator Brad
13 Hoylman and Council Member Rosie Mendez supporting
14 the designation and excluding the rear building. The
15 Commission also received a letter from New York State
16 Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh asking the Commission
17 to designate only the original front of the building.
18 The Commission received hundreds of letters and
19 emails in support of designation and 45 letters and
20 emails in opposition to designation.

21 On October 28th, 2014 the Commission
22 voted to designate the building a New York individual
23 landmark and excluded the back building from the
24 site. The First German Baptist Church, located at
25 334 East 14th Street, is a significant reminder of

2 the evolving character of the Lower East Side and an
3 excellent example of the Rundbogenstil style of
4 architecture. The church was erected in 1866-69 at
5 the northern boundary of Kleindeutschland, the
6 thriving, mid 19th century German community. The
7 German Baptist Church emphasized the affirmation of
8 German culture identity and had roots in the pietas
9 theological movement which favored basilican church
10 designs with simple forms and Chase ornament. The
11 First German Baptist Church was a vital social and
12 spiritual center for its largely poor and immigrant
13 congregation and an important center and training
14 grounds for the German Baptist Church in the late
15 19th and early 20th centuries.

16 In 1926 the First German Baptist Church
17 sold its building to the newly-formed Ukrainian
18 Autocephalic Orthodox Church of St. Volodymyr and in
19 1962 the Church of St. Volodymyr sold the building to
20 Congregation Tifereth Israel Town and Village
21 Synagogue.

22 Tifereth Israel Town and Village
23 Synagogue has earned a reputation for social
24 activism, egalitarianism and inclusiveness and has
25 played an important role in the social framework of

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2 the East Village. The building survives today as a
3 largely intact and fine example of the Rundbogenstil
4 style of architecture and is a significant reminder
5 of the rich cultural and social history of the Lower
6 East Side. The Commission urges you to affirm this
7 designation.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Miss
9 Fernandez. Any questions from members? 'Kay. Any
10 ques... [interpose, background comment] From Council
11 Member Mendez? 'Kay.

12 [background comments]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
14 I just wanted to make a statement; I had sent a
15 written statement to the LPC hearing; many members of
16 the staff of the LPC have gone with me to tour the
17 buildings, 'cause there are two buildings, they're
18 very distinct, built at different times and connected
19 now by a stairwell and certain openings that were
20 made, and you can see that the buildings are
21 different, as you have to step up to get into the
22 other building, so I am happy that we're only
23 landmarking the front building and not the rear
24 building and it is a very beautiful building,
25 religious institution, no matter what faith through

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2 the years it's become; just two doors down from my
3 district office. So thank you very much and I urge
4 my colleagues to vote aye.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Council
6 Member Mendez. Any questions from the public?

7 [background comments] You wanna testify?

8 [background comments]

9 JACQUELINE BERKOWITZ: Council Members,
10 my name is Jacqueline Berkowitz; I'm a member of Town
11 and Village Synagogue, I'm a past president and now
12 I'm a current Vice Chair of the Board. I do wanna
13 thank Council Member Mendez for being so supportive
14 and being helpful to us at the time of designation
15 and also having always taken a strong interest in our
16 building, and also Landmarks and it was very
17 satisfactory that having worked with Landmarks we
18 were able to let them actually see the building and
19 choose it. What I did wanna say was, and this may be
20 out of order and it's just something to consider
21 going forward, because we are a religious
22 institution, about landmarking and I don't know if it
23 would be City legislation or perhaps State
24 legislation; I obviously understand that you can't
25 make gifts to religious institutions; however, it

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2 happens that one of the great costs we may have in
3 keeping this landmark building is with the stained
4 glass windows you have, so had we just needed to
5 renovations, it's gonna add significantly. It seems
6 to me, even though people tell us there's money for
7 landmarked buildings, they're very small amounts that
8 people give; is there some way, as we really work
9 with all the new building going on in the City and
10 certainly Manhattan, to preserve our cultural and
11 religious heritage that we're... costs are imposed upon
12 a religious institution because of the government
13 process, such as the fact that it's landmarked;
14 should there be some sort of way that money is made
15 available, not for the whole building, but just for
16 those areas that we have to keep because of a
17 government order to help us be able to maintain it
18 and perpetuate it in the way that the government has
19 imposed upon us to do, and I know it's not just an
20 easy question, but it's something I think that
21 perhaps both the City Council and the State
22 Legislature should think about and you know,
23 obviously there are constitutional ramifications too,
24 but something to think about that specifically are
25 costs that come to us only because of a government

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2 action and landmarking; is there any way that perhaps
3 through member items or other that it would be deemed
4 appropriate to make donations there to keep that up?
5 I'm not talking about any activities inside or
6 religious, I'm just really talking -- for instance, I
7 know it's hundreds of thousands for the stained glass
8 windows, but thank you for giving me the time to
9 bring up this matter that matters to us and also I
10 wanna thank our local Council Member as well as
11 Landmarks for having given us the time to come to see
12 the building our way and give us a fair hearing.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So thank you. So would
15 you please fill out the form and give it to the
16 sergeant of arms... [crosstalk]

17 JACQUELINE BERKOWITZ: Yes, I sure will.
18 Thanks.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. [background
20 comments] We're gonna close the public hearing on
21 this item, Land Use 0167.

22 Now we have one more item to go, Land Use
23 Item No. 0168, which is 20155203 HKM, the Mills Hotel
24 No. 3 in Council Member Johnson's district. Miss
25 Fernandez; would you...

2 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair Koo;
3 members of the Subcommittee. My name is Jenny
4 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and
5 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
6 Commission; I am here today to testify on the
7 Commission's designation of the Mills Hotel No. 3 in
8 Manhattan.

9 On October 26th, 2010 the Landmarks
10 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
11 proposed designation as a landmark of the Mills Hotel
12 No. 3. Three witnesses spoke in favor of the
13 designation, including representatives of Assembly
14 Member Richard Gottfried, the Historic Districts
15 Council and the Victorian Society of New York. A
16 representative of the owner testified in opposition
17 to the designation. On October 14th, 2010 the full
18 board of Manhattan Community Board 5 adopted a
19 resolution in support of the designation. On October
20 28th, 2014 the Commission received a letter from
21 Scott J. Abram [sp?], Senior Vice President of 485
22 Seventh Avenue Associates, LLC, the contract vendee
23 of the Mills Hotel building, in support of
24 designation. On October 20th, 2014 the Commission
25 voted to designate the house a New York City

2 individual landmark and I would like to note for the
3 record that the Commission did receive a letter of
4 support from Council Member Corey Johnson once he
5 took office.

6 Described by the New York Times as the
7 world's biggest hotel and the finest for the use of
8 men of limited means, the 16th-story neo-Renaissance
9 building, built in 1906-1907 was the third and
10 largest of the three model residential hotels for
11 single working men built by Darius Ogden Mills at the
12 turn of the 20th century. Mills was a banker and
13 philanthropist particularly concerned with the
14 problems of housing the urban poor. In 1896 he
15 commissioned Ernest Flagg, a young architect who had
16 revolutionized thinking about low-cost urban housing,
17 to build the Mills House No. 1 at 160 Bleecker
18 Street, which is located in the South Village
19 Historic District and the Mills House No. 2 at
20 Chrystie and Rivington Streets, which has been since
21 demolished.

22 In 1905, spurred by the success of his
23 two earlier hotels and wanting a hotel in a thriving
24 Midtown location convenient to public transportation,
25 Mills commissioned the construction of the Mills

2 Hotel No. 3. The Mills family retained ownership of
3 this hotel until 1954 and the building remained a
4 low-cost hotel until the early 1980s; at that time it
5 became the Fashion Avenue Atrium and was remodeled
6 for use as offices and showrooms, it's facades remain
7 largely intact and the building retains its
8 historical and architectural significance as a
9 reminder of the housing reform movement in the
10 progressive era. The Commission urges you to affirm
11 the designation. I would also like to add, Chair
12 Koo, that the property has since been acquired by new
13 owners who are very supportive of designation and are
14 working with the Commission on plans for their
15 building.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Miss
17 Fernandez. Council Member Johnson.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair
19 Koo; good afternoon now. Jenny, thank you for being
20 here. I'd like to begin by thanking the Subcommittee
21 for considering Mills Hotel No. 3 for landmark
22 designation. This neo-Renaissance building located
23 in my district is notable for its historic
24 architecture and its role in the development of New
25 York City, with a façade clad with limestone, light-

2 colored brick and terracotta, the building's windows
3 are grouped with rhythmic patterns to produce a
4 visual interest. The building incorporates two light
5 courts designed to allow air and ventilation to reach
6 all units. This building is deserving of this
7 distinction not just for its architectural beauty,
8 but because of its historic importance from the
9 housing reform movement in the progressive era, as
10 Jenny said. The Mills Hotel No. 3 was built at the
11 turn of the century with the goal of creating a
12 dignified place for single working men to live right
13 in the heart of Manhattan. Many of these workers
14 were immigrants who arrived in New York after long
15 and arduous journeys, some were actors working in the
16 nearby theatre district and some were salesmen. In
17 any case, they contributed to the commercial and
18 artistic vibrancy of our city; they were willing to
19 work hard and in return they hoped for a decent
20 quality of life. Understanding this, Darius Ogden
21 Mills sought to create lodgings for these
22 individuals, apartments that offered greater dignity
23 and comfort than the tenements that so many were
24 forced to call home. Today we honor that decision,
25 which inspired additional housing that led to

2 millions of working-class New Yorkers to be able to
3 live in affordable, decent housing over the many
4 decades that followed. Though the Mills Hotel was
5 created over a century ago, we still strive to
6 preserve affordable housing in Midtown Manhattan; as
7 so, we remember Darius Mills and all those who sought
8 reform in urban housing. Working-class people keep
9 out businesses thriving, they erect our skyscrapers
10 and they keep our streets safe; there should always
11 be a place for them in the heart and history of our
12 great city. Again, I thank the Subcommittee for its
13 important work in protecting our architectural and
14 historic heritage and for recognizing a legacy that
15 we must continue and honor; I urge my colleagues to
16 vote in favor of designation and again, I thank you,
17 Chair Koo for the opportunity to testify today.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Council
19 Member Johnson. Any members from the Committee have
20 questions? Seeing none. Any members from the
21 public; questions? [background comments] Then we
22 will close this item, Item No. 0168. Thank you, Miss
23 Fernandez.

24 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair Koo.
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2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I'm gonna couple on the
3 vote to approve LU 0166, the Doering Bohack House; LU
4 0167, First German Baptist Church and LU 0168, Mills
5 Hotel No. 3. We're gonna ask the Counsel to call the
6 roll.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Palma.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
12 Arroyo.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
15 Mendez.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
18 Barron.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Council Member
21 Kallos.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Land Use Nos. 0166,
24 0167 and 0168 are approved with 6 votes in favor, 0
25 against and 0 abstaining.

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2 [background comment]

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay. We're gonna hold
4 the Committee for another 15 minutes [background
5 comment] and then we're gonna adjourn in 15 minutes.
6 [background comments] I also want to apologize for
7 my delay. [background comments]

8 FEMALE VOICE: Quiet please.

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We're gonna hold the
10 vote for 15 minutes and the meeting is adjourned.
11 [gavel]

12 [background comments, laughter]

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye on all.

15 [background comments]

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Final vote Committee
17 on Land Use, by a vote of 7 in the affirmative, 0
18 abstentions and no negatives, Motion to File LU 0158
19 is approved and Landmark Items LUs 0166, 0167 and
20 0168 are approved by 7 in the affirmative, no
21 abstentions, no negatives and all items are referred
22 to the full Land Use Committee.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So meeting is adjourned
24 officially. Thank you.

25 [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 January 14, 2015