

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

LAND USE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

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June 1, 2010
Start: 11:20 am
Recess:12:00 pm

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Hearing Room, 16th Floor

B E F O R E:
Brad S. Lander
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Maria Del Carmen Arroyo
Rosie Mendez
Jumaane D. Williams
Daniel J. Halloran III

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

Jenny Fernandez
Director
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Warren McKenzie
President
Staten Island Church Consistory

Daniel Garodnick
Council Member

Rita Sue Segal
Veronica Konint
Block Association

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

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CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning.

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This hearing on the subcommittee on Landmarks,

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Siting and Maritime Uses is called to order. I'm

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its chair, Brad Lander. I am joined this morning

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by council member Maria Del Carmen Arroyo, council

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member Jumaane Williams, council member Rosie

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Mendez of the committee and we are joined this

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morning by council member Dan Garodnick. We have

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two items in his district including the Upper East

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Side historic district extension.

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We've got a great agenda this

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morning and not too long of one so we'll get right

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to it. We're going to begin in the beautiful

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borough of Staten Island with the Reformed Church

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on Staten Island's Sunday school building and

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cemetery located at 54 Port Richmond Avenue Land

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use number 11020105516. And I want to invite

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Jenny Fernandez from the Landmarks Preservation

20

Commission to come up and testify.

21

JENNY FERNANDEZ: Good morning.

22

Thank you Chair Lander. Good morning council

23

members. My name is Jenny Fernandez, Director of

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Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the

25

Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here today

1
2 to testify on the Commission's designation of the
3 Reformed Church on Staten Island Sunday school
4 building and cemetery. On August 11, 2009 the
5 Landmark Preservation Commission held a public
6 hearing on the proposed designation as a landmark
7 of the Reformed Church on Staten Island Sunday
8 school building and cemetery.

9 A total of 11 witnesses including
10 city council member Kenneth Mitchell, Reformed
11 Church on Staten Island's consistory President
12 Warren McKenzie and representatives of the
13 historic district's council, The New York
14 Landmarks Conservancy, and The Preservation League
15 of Staten Island testified in support of this
16 designation.

17 The representative of the
18 Preservation League also appeared on behalf of the
19 North Shore Waterfront Greenbelt Association, the
20 West Brighton Restoration Society and the Four
21 Boroughs Neighborhood Preservation Alliance. A
22 number of members of the congregation who were
23 present at the hearing also rose with President
24 McKenzie to indicate their support for the
25 designation. The Commission has received two

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2 letters and one email in support of the
3 designation. There were no speakers or letters in
4 opposition to the designation. On March 23, 2010
5 the Commission voted to designate these as a New
6 York City individual landmark.

7 This Greek revival style church was
8 erected in 1844 to the designs of Staten Island
9 builder James G. Berger and was enlarged in 1898
10 with a Colonial revival Sunday school addition
11 designed by architect Oscar S. Teale.

12 The church's congregation is the
13 oldest in Staten Island and its first church
14 building was erected at the site in 1715. The
15 present church is the congregation's third. It is
16 the oldest church building on the North Shore and
17 one of the oldest churches on Staten Island.

18 The cemetery incorporates a burying
19 ground by 1704 and 1705 and includes a grave
20 markers dated between 1816 and 1916. The cemetery
21 is the burial site of a female slave who was the
22 mother of Benjamin and Fortune Purine.

23 Fortune and his wife had eight
24 members of this church and Benjamin continued to
25 worship here until his death in 1900 at the age of

1
2 104. At his death Purine was the oldest man on
3 Staten Island and the last born into slavery.

4 Together the church, Sunday school
5 building and cemetery are significant reminders of
6 the historical, cultural and architectural
7 development of the Port Richmond neighborhood on
8 Staten Island.

9 The Commission urges you to affirm
10 this designation.

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
12 much Ms. Fernandez. You know that we are
13 enthusiastic about designations in the outer
14 boroughs that recognize the contributions and the
15 fight against slavery and also of religious
16 institutions where the religious institution
17 itself is in support of the designation. So it's
18 nice to have you with us this morning.

19 Any questions for the LPC?
20 Councilman Williams?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I just
22 want to say thank you for the testimony. I'm
23 always happy to see when history of the slavery of
24 New York is mentioned in these historical sitings.
25 I appreciate it.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We have one
3 person signed up to testify on this matter.
4 Warren McKenzie from the Reformed Church on Staten
5 Island. Mr. McKenzie?

6 WARREN MCKENZIE: Good morning
7 council members. Thank you very much. I also
8 want to thank the Commission for the work that
9 they have done. They have made the process simple
10 and straightforward and we appreciate that.

11 The church was originally
12 designated in 1964, one of the first buildings to
13 be considered. And the congregation at the time
14 did not see the wisdom in doing this. So it's
15 been a long, arduous struggle and we think we've
16 got it right now and we are 100% in support of it.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you so
18 much. Could you say your name for the record?

19 MR. MCKENZIE: Sure. It's Warren
20 McKenzie, I'm the President of the church's
21 consistory. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: So are there
23 any questions for Mr. McKenzie?

24 Thanks very much for coming and
25 taking the time to testify on behalf of this

1
2 matter. Seeing no one else—Council member
3 Williams. I'm sorry.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Sorry, I
5 just want to know what a consistory is. Okay,
6 thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We should know
8 while the rest of us pretend like we know what
9 he's talking about. Alright, thanks. Well,
10 seeing as there is no other testimony on this
11 matter we'll close the public hearing and move on
12 to the next one which is Land Use number
13 11120105517HKM The Joseph B. and Josephine H.
14 Bissell house located at West 55th Street in
15 Council member Garodnick's district, so we're
16 lucky to have them with us here today.

17 We will begin again with Jenny
18 Fernandez from the Landmarks Preservation
19 Commission.

20 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you Chair
21 Lander. Good morning, council members once again.
22 My name is Jenny Fernandez, Director of
23 Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the
24 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here today
25 to testify on the Commission's landmark

1
2 designation of the Joseph B. and Josephine H.
3 Bissell House in Manhattan.

4 On June 23, 2009 the Landmarks
5 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
6 the proposed designation as a landmark of the
7 Joseph B. and Josephine H. Bissell house and the
8 proposed designation of the related landmark site.
9 The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with
10 the provisions of law. Three people spoke of
11 designation including representatives of council
12 member Daniel Garodnick, the West 55th Street Block
13 Association and the Historic District's Council. A
14 representative of the owner spoke in opposition of
15 the designation. On March 23, 2010, the
16 Commission voted to designate the building in New
17 York City into an individual landmark.

18 The Joseph B. and Josephine H.
19 Bissell house was originally constructed and is
20 one of five tenement style brownstone houses
21 designed by architect Thomas Thomas and built in
22 1869 by owner and builder John W. Stevens. By the
23 early twentieth century this area was the city's
24 most prestigious residential neighborhood and was
25 known as Vanderbilt Road because of that family's

1
2 involvement in maintaining the elite character of
3 the neighborhood.

4 The house was purchased by
5 Josephine H. Bissell in 1903 and she hired
6 prominent architect Edward L. Tilton to alter the
7 house by removing the traditional Italian style
8 brownstone façade and its high stoop and replacing
9 it with a more fashionable neoclassical style
10 brick and limestone facade with in an American
11 basement plan.

12 Bissell house façade is a rare
13 example of a private residential commission by
14 Tilton who is particularly associated with the
15 design of libraries. Mrs. Bissell lived in the
16 house with her husband, Dr. Joseph B. Bissell and
17 their children and sold it shortly after his
18 death. Dr. Bissell was a surgeon who did
19 pioneering research in the treatment of cancer
20 with Radium. Several prominent physicians lived
21 in the house in the first half of the twentieth
22 century.

23 Gradually the house went from
24 residential to non-residential use and is
25 currently owned by a clothing manufacturer based

1
2 in Italy. The Commission urges you to affirm this
3 designation.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
5 much for your testimony. Are there any questions
6 for Ms. Fernandez?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank
8 you, I just want to thank the Landmarks Commission
9 for their moving forward with this designation and
10 I'll make some comments after my constituents do
11 but I did want to thank you for this and I support
12 it.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
14 much. Don't go too far. Okay, so we have signed
15 up to testify on this issue both Rita Sue Segal
16 and Veronica Konint, if you guys can come up
17 together and take a seat at the table.

18 Thanks very much for joining us
19 this morning. When you're ready just push the
20 button to turn the light off and just begin by
21 stating your name for the record.

22 RITA SUE SEGAL: I'm Rita Sue
23 Segal, I'm the Vice President and Landmarks Chair
24 of the West 54, 55th Street Block Association
25 incorporating West 56th Street as well. Vera and I

1
2 went to visit, this is Vera Konint, our President,
3 went to visit Francesco who is the CEO of Le
4 Copain, the luxury Italian clothing manufacturer
5 who is the owner of the building and who objected.

6 I was at the hearing when he
7 objected and he objected because he didn't believe
8 that Tilton was the architect. His interior
9 designer told him that Tilton had left the firm
10 nine months after he got the commission. I
11 explained to him how somebody can design a façade
12 of a building in less than nine months. He also
13 didn't understand why Landmarks was interested in
14 who lived in the building and he didn't understand
15 how this was going to affect his air rights.

16 We were under the impression that
17 Landmarks would have reached out to somebody like
18 this especially somebody who doesn't come from
19 here, who comes from Italy and is occasionally in
20 the U.S.

21 He wrote a letter when he got a
22 letter last week asking him to appear here asking
23 for a postponement because he was in Europe and he
24 was told, absolutely not. We believe that we
25 convinced him that Tilton did design it, that his

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2 air rights are going to be affected positively and
3 various other little things that he was worried
4 about. We also explained that just the looks of
5 the building is not the reason that it gets
6 landmarked.

7 So we think we've alleviated his
8 objection and we just think that in the future
9 when, it doesn't even have to be somebody who
10 isn't from here but when somebody objects perhaps
11 there is a reaching out that can explain it to
12 that person so they have a better feeling for the
13 entire process. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

15 (crosstalk)

16 VERONICA KONINT: Chair Lander and
17 members of the city council's Landmarks committee
18 and council member Garodnick. I'm Veronica
19 Konint, President of the West 54, 55th Street Block
20 Association which is located in the Preservation
21 sub district of the special midtown district
22 including West 54th, 55th and 56th Street between
23 Fifth and Sixth Avenues midblock north of the
24 Museum of Modern Art.

25 I am here in support of Landmark

1
2 designation for the town house at 46 West 55th
3 Street or which we initiated the request for
4 evaluation by the Landmarks Commission and which
5 we were able to research thanks to the funding
6 from the city council, special thanks to the
7 council member Dan Garodinick and the New York
8 State Assembly and particularly Assembly member
9 Dick Godfried.

10 We are really delighted that it
11 reached this point after a couple of years. WE
12 have been working on it for some time. So we are
13 very glad that it has reached this point. As
14 Jenny Fernandez described I don't have to repeat
15 what she said. It's a beautiful building
16 originally by Thomas Thomas in 1869 when it was a
17 series of brownstones right in the neighborhood.

18 The area became very fashionable at
19 the turn of the century and it became Vanderbilt's
20 Row, with lots of bankers, physicians. In this
21 particular building there were several physicians
22 who lived as was mentioned before. Dr. Bissell
23 was mentioned, after him there was a Dr. Hunt,
24 James Ramsey Hunt who was a neurologist at
25 Columbia and several neurological conditions were

1
2 named after him and a third physician, a whole
3 couple followed him in 1943. Dr. Sydney Newcomer
4 was an inventor as well as a physician and his
5 wife Dr. Marion Newcomer also had a book of
6 medical advice to patients.

7 And as you mentioned it is now
8 owned by Le Copain. It was also mentioned that
9 LPC in March unanimously to designate the town
10 house and the designation has been supported as
11 mentioned by both our officials and
12 preservationists. I have copies of these for you
13 and which you received.

14 Our midblocks in the Preservation
15 sub district is zoned C5P with maximum FAR 8, are
16 filled with unique low scale townhouses, apartment
17 buildings, lots of small business, restaurants and
18 hotels. The area was recommended in 1982 by the
19 Department of City Planning for historic
20 designation. Unfortunately, it didn't happen,
21 instead it was zoned a preservation sub district.
22 These blocks are the last remnants of what Midtown
23 used to look like and they are very alive. Even
24 mixed used residential, commercial neighborhood
25 worthy of preservation.

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2 We have 15 designated, individual
3 landmarks in the blocks and thanks to you and
4 funding from the city council and state. This is
5 the fifth individual landmark to be designated
6 since 2007. I hope that you will consider the
7 beauty and the rich history of this remarkable
8 townhouse at 46 West 56th Street and support the
9 efforts to designate it a landmark. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you both
11 for taking the time to testify. Ms. Segal, thank
12 you. It's not often that a support of designation
13 will urge the city to do more outreach to folks
14 who might be confused about or even opposed to it.
15 And I think it's a very helpful comment for us to
16 be mindful of so thank you very much. We'll see
17 if anyone has any questions for you. Council
18 member Garodinick?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank
20 you very much Mr. Chairman. And I want to again
21 add my voice of support for the designation of 46
22 West 55th Street. And in particular, I want to
23 thank Vera Konint and Rita Sue Segal for their
24 advocacy here. They noted that this is the fifth
25 individual landmark designation since 2007. Their

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2 advocacy has been extraordinary. They reached out
3 to my office on this subject. WE absolutely agree
4 on the beauty and history of the building. I urge
5 the Landmarks Commission to take it up
6 contemporaneously with their researching it and
7 pushing the LPC to take it up on April 15, 2008.
8 I was pleased to testify in support of this
9 designation before the Landmarks Commission on
10 June 23, 2009 and I just want to note the
11 particular beauty and character of the
12 neighborhood that Rita Sue and Vera represent. It
13 is an area with a distinct sense of place and
14 history and culture and their efforts have really
15 highlighted that to the city and to this council
16 so I want to recognize that.

17 I also want to acknowledge Rita Use
18 Segal's comments about outreach to building owners
19 and we should think together about ways we can do
20 that better because we certainly do not want
21 people to object to designation based on
22 procedural grounds certainly if they're
23 substantive objections. We all want to understand
24 those and appreciate those but it seems that there
25 is broad support for this designation and I'm

1
2 certainly pleased to support it as well. Thank
3 you Mr. Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
5 much, any other questions for our panel. No?
6 Council member Mendez?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I want to
8 thank the two of you for reaching out to the owner
9 and for working preserving your community. I
10 remember walking through these blocks and seeing
11 some of these buildings and just thinking they're
12 so wonderful I'm going to go back with a new eye
13 now and go back and look at these buildings again.
14 And Mr. Chair I do know that the Landmarks
15 Preservation Commission does reach out to and
16 sometimes they've reached out to me and ask ne if
17 I have buildings right near me and asked me to
18 reach out to the owners if I knew them. I was
19 wondering if we could just get on the record what
20 is the procedure right now in terms of contacting
21 owners and see from there what else we could be
22 doing.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: That's a good
24 suggestion. So let me ask, thank you for your
25 testimony and go ahead and sit down and I'll ask

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2 Ms. Fernandez to go back up and talk about
3 outreach procedure.

4 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you. So I
5 just wanted to state on the record that for this
6 particular land there was extensive outreach that
7 was done. The Commission through practice begins
8 early on to reach out to owners. We send
9 certified mail to make sure that they have
10 received our correspondence. We wait, we ask them
11 to give us a call so that we can meet with them.
12 Many times the owners are either reluctant, you
13 know if they are not necessarily very clear about
14 what it is and we strongly encourage them to come
15 in and meet with us because we don't just you know
16 let them know that this is what we are going to do
17 and then move ahead.

18 We certainly encourage them to come
19 in and meet with the Commission staff, the
20 Executive Director who does most of the outreach
21 herself. Her special assistant keeps track of the
22 correspondence and the outreach efforts that are
23 mean to the different owners and in this
24 particular case, our general counsel, Mark
25 Silverman was in a meeting with the owner where

1 discussion of air rights, etcetera did take place.
2 I understand many times because the process does
3 take long, these meetings may take place, and the
4 designation vote or the calendaring vote may not
5 happen for a very long time so an owner may feel
6 that, you know, they haven't heard back from us or
7 something like that which was a comment that was
8 given to me by Ms. Konint but I wan to make
9 absolutely clear that outreach efforts are very
10 much a part of what we're doing when we're leading
11 up to a calendaring vote which Council member
12 Mendez said and I am very grateful that she did
13 say that on the record. We even reach out to
14 council members, anyone who can help us with
15 contacting and owner, so.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Alright, well
18 thank you for your time Ms. Fernandez.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Ms.
20 Fernandez, can you also tell us, like in this
21 case, the owner did not live there so the
22 notifications that are certified mailed they go to
23 what address if there's an alternate address and
24 what if the owner does not speak English or
25 English is not their primary language, what else

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is done by the Commission to speak to these individuals who are not English dominant.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay.

MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you for that question. Certainly we begin the process, we usually start with Department of Finance records which are, which is what we need to use, you know, by law. So we reach out there if we don't have any success with our correspondence and things are returned to us then we begin to try to do research to figure out, you know, either if the owner of the building is an actual LLC or a different company under a different name. We do all this research to try to get to the owner. By law, we have to give notification to an owner so if our correspondence is not successful we do additional research to try to find different addresses that we can reach out to them.

We try to find phone numbers in the Department of Buildings and if they have filed for work in the past. So there's tons of research that's done to try to get to the owner. And again, many times it does result with having the owner coming in to meet with us which is the

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2 ultimate goal. And, what was the second part of
3 the question? The English one, yes. So,
4 certainly in cases like that, you know, the city
5 does offer translation services so we would employ
6 translation services if the owner, you know, if
7 English was their second language or they weren't
8 comfortable.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I have
10 another question before we finish owner's
11 notification 101. What happens because sometimes
12 designation does take a long time, what happens if
13 a building is sold and the previous owner who
14 might have been contacted does not notify--what
15 steps does the Commission take when a building has
16 been sold?

17 MS. FERNANDEZ: Then we then begin
18 the outreach effort again with a new owner because
19 now it's a different person so obviously the
20 previous owner outreach is kind of null and void
21 so we would begin outreach, doing outreach to the
22 new owner and many times if it's a building that's
23 already in the designation process so it's been
24 calendared are notified, you know, we try to keep
25 our pulse on that sort of thing. So if the

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2 ownership has changed we will then begin outreach
3 efforts anew to that new owner.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: How will
you notify them?

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MS. FERNANDEZ: We again, we check
Department of Finance records and that will
usually tell us if there has been a transfer of
title to a different owner or we can tell from
there. And many times if we're just continuing
outreach the previous owner will let us know that
they're trying to sell the building or that they
have sold the building or they're in the process
of that so you know we remain aware of that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And does
the Commission also reach out to Block
Associations or other groups in the neighborhood
when an owner might be opposed to see if they know
the owner or have some relationship and do you
contact them to do some reach out to the owner as
well?

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MS. FERNANDEZ: We don't do
outreach directly to Block Associations or you
know to try to get them to contact the owner only
because we do such extensive owner outreach

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2 efforts and we're usually very successful in
3 trying to contact an owner. If we're having no
4 luck we again send letters. If we know that, our
5 green receipts, which means that somebody actually
6 did sign for a letter. That lets us know that
7 they may not be contacting us back but they know,
8 you know, what the Commission is doing or that
9 we've expressed interest and that we're trying to
10 get in touch with them. SO that happens in that
11 instance.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: So then,
13 you do a lot of work in outreach but sometimes
14 like when I've gotten a call. I may not know, I
15 know a lot of people, particularly in my little
16 neighborhood but sometimes I may know someone from
17 the Block Association that sometimes having a
18 neighbor approach someone and I think that's what
19 happened in this case just maybe allayed some of
20 the fears because I think government might be a
21 little frightening to some people. Even me and
22 Dan are kind of frightening, it's kind of hard to
23 believe to some people.

24 MS. FERNANDEZ: Very hard to
25 believe.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: So, anyway
3 thank you very much and thank you Mr. Chair for
4 indulging me.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks, this
6 was a helpful conversation so thanks very much.
7 [crosstalk]

8 Alright, we have no other speakers
9 signed up to testify on this matter so unless
10 someone else presents themselves we will close the
11 public hearing on the Bissell house. Thanks very
12 much for coming out to testify.

13 And in respect of Council member
14 Garodnick's time with us, we will jump ahead one
15 item and next go to Land Use number 1132010558HKM
16 the Upper East Side Historic District Extension in
17 Manhattan. Just for the two of you and all others
18 who are here we do the testimony first and then we
19 will vote at the end so.

20 Thanks, Ms. Fernandez.

21 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you Chair
22 Lander and members of the committee. Again for
23 the record, my name is Jenny Fernandez, Director
24 of Intergovernmental and Community Relations for
25 the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here

1
2 today to testify on behalf of the designation of
3 the Upper East Side Historic District Extension in
4 Manhattan. On October 27, 2009 the Landmarks
5 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
6 the designation of the Upper East Side Historic
7 District Extension. 22 people spoke in favor of
8 designation including city council member Daniel
9 Garodnick, Community Board 8 district manager Lisa
10 Thompson, Andrew Dolcart, Director of the Historic
11 Designation program at Columbia University,
12 representatives of State Senator Jonathon Bing,
13 representative Karen Maloney, Manhattan borough
14 President Scott Stringer, city council member
15 Jessica Lappin, Friends of the Upper East Side
16 Historic District, the Municipal Arts Society, the
17 Society for the architecture of the City, the
18 Historic District's council, the New York
19 Landmarks Conservancy, Carnegie Hill neighbors and
20 as well as three neighborhood residents. One of
21 the speakers spoke in favor of the designation as
22 a representative of both the View Arts Alliance
23 and the Church of the Resurrection.

24 Another speaker wrote two letters
25 in support of the designation. A representative

1
2 of the Real Estate Board of New York was the only
3 speaker in opposition to designation. On March
4 23, 2010 the Commission voted to designate the
5 Upper East Side Historic District in Manhattan a
6 New York City historic district.

7 The Upper East Side historic
8 district extension encompasses 74 buildings
9 located in two sections along Lexington Avenue
10 between East 63rd and East 76th Streets. The
11 historic district extension shares a similar
12 development history and contains buildings of
13 comparable type and character to those of the
14 immediately adjacent Upper East Side historic
15 district. The first major period development
16 within the historic district extension occurred
17 during the 1870s when real estate developers
18 commissioned rows of speculative houses within the
19 area.

20 The dozens of 1870s and 1880s were
21 particularly designed in the popular Italian and
22 Neo Grec styles and were three or four stories in
23 height with a raised roof, floor accessed by a
24 tall stoop. Architects of these original row
25 houses included Frederick Berris, Tom Wilson, John

1
2 G. Preg, and E. B. Ogden many of whose work also
3 appears within the previously designated Upper
4 East Side historic district.

5 While many of the houses of this
6 period were demolished to make room for the larger
7 apartment houses of the 1910s and the 1920s
8 several hansom rows have remained largely intact.
9 The historic district extension experienced a
10 second significant period of development in the
11 early 20th century primarily due to the completion
12 of the IRT Lexington Avenue subway line in 1918.
13 Many of the row houses in the area were
14 extensively altered in the area at this time and
15 residents frequently commissioned well-known
16 architects to modernize both the interiors and
17 exteriors of their dwellings. Other dwellings,
18 especially those facing busy Lexington Avenue
19 received new commercial storefronts on the first
20 and second floors during the second decade of the
21 20th century. Other buildings received entirely
22 new facades to accommodate the new mix of
23 commercial and residential uses.

24 Starting in the early years of the
25 20th century, apartment house living was becoming

1
2 fashionable for wealthy New Yorkers. The historic
3 district extension contains a number of fine
4 examples of apartment houses designed in the
5 Renaissance Revival and Colonial Revival styles.
6 The buildings that comprised of the historic
7 district extension are inextricably linked
8 architecturally, historically and visually to the
9 previously designated Upper East Side Historic
10 district.

11 The residential structures both
12 large and small of the historic district extension
13 in conjunction with later commercial
14 accommodations made to the buildings lining
15 Lexington Avenue are representative of the
16 important trends in the development of the Upper
17 East Side of Manhattan. The Commission urges you
18 to affirm this designation.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
20 much for your testimony. Council member
21 Garodnick, would you like to lead us off.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I would,
23 Mr. Chairman. Again recognizing the versatility
24 of Council District 4, extending from the West 50s
25 to the Upper East Side down all the way to 14th

1
2 Street and Avenue C, I'm very please to support
3 the extension of, the expansion of the Upper East
4 Side historic District which is a long sought
5 after goal by my constituents. Certainly as all
6 historic districts do, this historic district
7 creates a distinct sense of place and there is no
8 mistaking where you are when you stroll down Fifth
9 Avenue or Madison or Park and take in the elegant
10 row houses, town houses and mansions that have
11 defined the area for the past century.

12 The same is true of course of
13 Lexington Avenue and I should note that the
14 Landmarks Commission did not want to include any
15 portion of the Southern extension from 60th to 65th
16 Street in this expansion and along with Friends of
17 the Upper East Side Historic District and others
18 we asked the LPC to reconsider and to look at the
19 worthiness of the buildings in that area of the
20 expansion. And I'm very glad that they did and
21 that they recognize the significance of those
22 blocks expanding the district to include the area
23 to include the 64th and 65th Streets at Lexington
24 Avenue and also including the North of 72nd is
25 going to unify what I believe to be the historic

1
2 district's residences and safeguard the condition
3 of the buildings on those blocks.

4 We are very lucky to enjoy a rich
5 cultural, historical, and architectural heritage
6 on the Upper East Side and it certainly would not
7 be possible without the work of the Friends of the
8 Upper East Side Historic Districts and other
9 preservationists who pushed for this and certainly
10 we appreciate the Landmarks Commission's work and
11 look forward to this district's expansion. So Mr.
12 Chairman, again, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
14 much Council member. Any other questions on
15 Lexington Avenue nearby? Alright, seeing none.
16 Thank you very much. We have no one signed up
17 testify on this matter. Many people of course
18 have testified in favor of it at the LPC. So we
19 will close the hearing on the Upper East Side
20 historic district and move to our, we do have
21 someone signed up to testify.

22 No, I don't have a slip, that
23 doesn't mean you're not welcome to come testify.
24 That's okay, take a seat. Please both say and
25 spell your name for the record.

1
2 TARA KELLY: Sure, I'm Tara Kelly.
3 I'm the new Executive Director of the Friends of
4 the Upper East Side Historic Districts. So, thank
5 you. Thank you Chair Lander and committee
6 members. It's with great pleasure and gratitude
7 that I stand before you to testify on behalf of
8 the proposed Upper East Side historic district
9 extension to include 74 buildings in two sections
10 along Lexington Avenue between East 63rd and East
11 75th Streets. As you're surely aware, Friends of
12 the Upper East Side historic district hatched the
13 idea of expanding the district to include 192
14 buildings along Lexington Avenue quite a long time
15 ago, actually ten years ago. Because of Friends'
16 initiative and the help of Council member Dan
17 Garodnick, an expanded district with larger
18 boundaries in the district before us was listed on
19 the state and national register of historic places
20 in 2006. A great accomplishment with many
21 benefits but of course we were waiting for this
22 stage to really ensure the district's protection.

23 Friends has long been aware of the
24 fragile nature of Lexington Avenue's livable and
25 lovable streetscape, its clusters of low rise 19th

1
2 century row houses, elegant pre war apartment
3 buildings and most importantly its enduring spirit
4 as one of New York City's great main streets.

5 They are wonderful and unusual
6 examples of architecture in the extension area
7 such as the remarkable Porridge house on East 65th
8 Street and a row of rare surviving stables on East
9 75th Street. Well-known architects and firms have
10 built in the proposed district as well such as
11 Frederick Sterner, Rauth and Goldstone, Schwartz
12 and Gross, and Cross and Cross. Indeed the
13 quality and history and mix of architecture in the
14 extension area are perfectly in keeping with the
15 existing 1981 district.

16 Friends hope you will take
17 immediate action to affirm the designation of the
18 Upper East Side historic district extension
19 ensuring appropriate development while maintaining
20 the low scale sense of place and the historic
21 architecture of this great New York City
22 neighborhood. Thank you and thank you especially
23 Council member Garodnick.

24 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
25 much for your testimony. We appreciate your

1
2 taking the time to come down. Alright, anyone
3 else here to testify on this. Alright, thanks
4 very much. We'll close the hearing on that item
5 and move to our fourth and final item for today
6 which is Land Use number 112201105518HKM, the
7 Brill building at 1619 Broadway in Speaker Quinn's
8 district.

9 MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you Chair
10 Lander, members of the committee. My name is
11 Jenny Fernandez, Director of the Intergovernmental
12 and Community Relations for the Landmarks
13 Preservation Commission. I'm here today to
14 testify on the Commission's designation of the
15 Brill building in Manhattan. On October 27, 2009
16 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a
17 public hearing on the proposed designation of the
18 Brill building. Three people spoke in support of
19 designation including representatives of the
20 owner, the New York State Assembly member Richard
21 Godfried, and the historic district's council.
22 There were no speakers in opposition to
23 designation. On March 23, 2010 the Commission
24 voted to designate the building a New York City
25 individual landmark.

1
2 Since its construction in 1931 the
3 11 story Brill building has been synonymous with
4 American music. From the last days of Tin Pan
5 Alley to the emergence of Rock and Roll.

6 Occupying the corner of West Broadway and 49th
7 Street it was commissioned by a real estate
8 developer Abraham Lovequart on lands leased from
9 the Brill brothers, owners of a men's clothing
10 store. The Brills later foreclosed on the
11 property and the name was changed to the Brill
12 building. Designed in the art deco style by
13 architect, Victor A. Bark, Jr., the white brick
14 elevations feature hansom terracotta reliefs. A
15 remarkable number of tenants have been music
16 publishers but the building's also notable for
17 attracting an evolving roster of songwriters,
18 booking agents, vocal coaches, publicity agents,
19 talent agents and performers.

20 As the popularity of big band music
21 in Jazz increased many performers leased offices
22 in the building including Tommy Dorsey, Duke
23 Ellington, and Nat King Cole. By the early 1960s
24 more than 160 tenants were involved in the music
25 industry. While not every artist is associated

1
2 with the so called Brill building sound actually
3 worked at 1619 Broadway. These creative men and
4 women produced some of early Rock and Roll's most
5 beautifully crafted and memorable songs. The
6 building's commercial tenants also included such
7 fashionable restaurants as Jack Dempsey's on the
8 Turf and the succession of vast second floor night
9 clubs including The Hurricane, Club Zanzibar, and
10 Bop City where Jazz briefly gained a prime midtown
11 venue and a wider audience in the 1940s. The
12 Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Ms. Fernandez,
14 this is the second time you've come before us with
15 a landmark that involved music without a
16 soundtrack, any singing, ipod to give us some
17 flare.

18 MS. FERNANDEZ: You don't want me
19 to sing.

20 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: No, maybe we
21 can fit it out so that the headphones that when
22 people go by on the tour buses will blare some
23 music. Anyway, thank you very much for your
24 testimony. We've been joined by Council member
25 Dan Halloran from Queens. Are there any questions?

1

2

Anyone here to testify on the matter? Hum a tune?

3

No, alright, thank you very much. The hearing on

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this matter is closed and this concluded the

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public hearing portion of our meeting unless

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anyone has any reason otherwise we will now move

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to a vote on all four items on today's calendar.

8

The Chair recommends a vote of aye and asks the

9

council to call the roll.

10

CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Christian

11

Hylton, counsel to the committee. Chair Lander?

12

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Aye.

13

CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Council member

14

Arroyo.

15

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO:

16

[no response heard.]

17

CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Council member

18

Mendez?

19

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye on all.

20

CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Council member

21

Williams?

22

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Aye.

23

CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Council member

24

Halloran?

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COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Aye.

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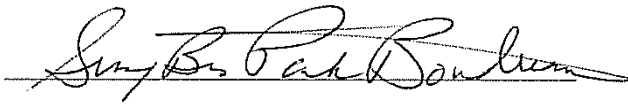
CHRISTIAN HYLTON: By a vote of five in the affirmative, none in the negative and no abstentions LU 110, 111, 112 and 113 are approved and referred to the Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very much to the staff for all their work on these matters and our meeting is closed.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Sung Bin Park-Boudreau certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature_____



Date June 14, 2010