

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 24, 2017  
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
16<sup>th</sup> Fl

B E F O R E: PETER A. KOO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma  
Deborah L. Rose  
Rosie Mendez  
Stephen T. Levin  
Inez D. Barron  
Ben Kallos

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

Lisa Kersavage, Director  
Strategic Planning  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lauren George, Director  
Intergovernmental Affairs,  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Kate Lemos McHale, Research Director  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Andrea Golden  
Landmarks Conservancy



[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning. I'm Council Member Koo, Chair of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. We are joined by Council Members Annabel Palma [laughs]- Annabel Palma, Steven Levin, Dan Garodnick and Kallos. Yeah, yeah. [laughs] Council Member Barron is here. Yeah. I'm sorry about that, to mix you up, yeah. We're-we're holding a public hearing and voted on 12 individual landmark applications to day proposed for designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission pursuant to Section 3-3020 of the City Charter. The landmarking of these buildings all located in East Midtown is the key part of the proposed East Midtown design, which was currently certified in the public review by the City Planning Commission. LPC will present on the 12 items together in one presentation, and then we will hear testimony from the public. The items are as follows:

1. The Graybar building, located at 420 Lexington Avenue.

2. The Beverly Hotel now known as the Benjamin Hotel located at 125 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street.

3. The Pershing Square Building,  
located at 125 Park Avenue.

4. The Shelton Hotel, located at 525  
Lexington Avenue.

5. The Hotel Lexington, located at 511  
Lexington Avenue.

6. The 400 Madison Avenue Building,  
located at 400 Madison Avenue.

7. The Minnie E. Young House, located  
at 19 East 54<sup>th</sup> Street.

8. The Martin Erdmann House, located at  
75-59 East 55<sup>th</sup> Street.

9. The Yale Club of New York City,  
located at 50 Vanderbilt Avenue, also known as 49-55  
East 44<sup>th</sup> Street.

10. The Hampton Shops Building, located  
at 18-20 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street.

11. The 18 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street Building,  
located at 18-20 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

12. The Citicorp Center, located at 601  
Lexington Avenue.

I will now open the public hearing for  
all 12 preconsidered LUs. We have—we have William  
George, Landmarks Preservation, LPC and then Lisa

2 Kersavage, (sic) and also Kate Lemos to testify.

3 Yeah. You may—you may start after you—yeah, you may  
4 start after you—you introduce yourself.

5 LISA KERSAVAGE: Good morning, Council  
6 Members. It's really a pleasure to be here. I'm  
7 joined by my colleagues. I'm Lisa Kersavage the  
8 Director of Strategic Planning at Landmarks. I'm  
9 joined by Lauren George, who we all know is the  
10 Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, and our new  
11 Research Director Kate Lemos McHale, who we're very  
12 excited to bring on board at Landmarks.

13 So I'm happy to be here especially to  
14 present 12 individual landmarks designated by the  
15 Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 22<sup>nd</sup>  
16 and December 6<sup>th</sup>. These designations are the  
17 culmination of the Greater East Midtown Initiative,  
18 the LPC's Historic Preservation Plan for the  
19 district, and part of the Administration's multi-  
20 agency effort to plan for district's future. The  
21 LPC's plan is in alignment with the East-East Midtown  
22 Steering Committee's guidelines for recognizing the  
23 value of the area's historic resources, and the  
24 committee gave the agency deference and latitude in  
25 determining which buildings to designate. This

1 presentation will have a very brief introduction  
2 about the initiative and then also brief summaries of  
3 the significance of each of the 12 buildings. The  
4 LPC's Greater East Midtown Study Area is from East  
5 39<sup>th</sup> Street—oh, I'm sorry that it's all behind you—to  
6 East 57<sup>th</sup>. This is outlined in brown, from Fifth  
7 Avenue to Second Avenue. The Commission has long  
8 recognized the architectural and historical value of  
9 East Midtown dating back to 1966 when it designated  
10 St. Patrick's Cathedral Complex. Since then, the LPC  
11 has designated 38 individual landmarks and one  
12 historic district. It is unusual for the LPC to  
13 develop a designation plan that acknowledges and  
14 preserves the history of an area—of a district  
15 through the designation of individual landmarks. To  
16 address this challenge, these analyses is akin to how  
17 we approach a historic district, and we identified  
18 three key development arrows to provide the  
19 analytical framework for assessing these historic  
20 resources. Those are pre-Grand Central Terminal era,  
21 Grand Central Terminal era and the post Grand Central  
22 Terminal era. We then considered the already  
23 designated landmarks and how well these buildings  
24 represent each era, and whether additional historic  
25

resources to enhance the development history and narrative of the district. Through this analysis, we have identified 12 buildings that merit designation and that are the subject of today's hearings. Those are in purple on the map. In the pre-Grand Central Terminal era, the Commission designated two landmarks, the Minnie E. Young House as one of the earliest works by the prominent architectural firm of Hiss and Weekes, who designed this distinguished Renaissance Revival style townhouse that was built from 1899 to 1900. It's like in our East 54<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue. The house is an excellent example of a fashionable townhouse that was designed by classically trained architects to reflect the upper class taste of wealth New York families at the turn of the century. This house represents the period prior to the construction of Grand Central Terminal when the area around Fifth Avenue in East Midtown was a pres—a prestigious residential enclave. Today, the building has a high level of integrity despite a modest rooftop addition, and is owned and occupied by the Interaudi Bank.

The Martin Erdmann House is a picturesque English Revival style house built from 1908 to 09.



1 It is located on East 55<sup>th</sup> Street between Madison and  
2 Park, which was at the time a prestigious res-  
3 residential enclave, and it illustrates the  
4 development of the neighborhood for affluent New  
5 Yorkers around the turn century. The house was  
6 designed by the firm of Taylor and Levi know for  
7 their high style period Revival houses in New York  
8 City. It replaced two earlier 1870s brownstones and  
9 the contrast with those earlier buildings to this one  
10 is clearly evident in this 1910 photograph. The  
11 house remains remarkably intact to its original  
12 design and retains its domestic character. Today the  
13 building is used by the Friars Club and owned by  
14 them, a social club for entertainment professionals.  
15 The Friars have owned the townhouse for their social  
16 and business center since 1957. Grand Central  
17 Terminal era the Commission designated nine buildings  
18 from this era as part of this initiative.

19  
20 18 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street is an early 20<sup>th</sup>  
21 Century skyscraper notable for its inventive use of  
22 Graves' terracotta ornaments. The building is on the  
23 south side of East 41<sup>st</sup> Street mid-block between  
24 Madison Avenue and Fifth Avenue. 18 East 41<sup>st</sup> was  
25 constructed between 1912 and 14 designed by George

1 and Edward Blum it was the firm's first office  
2 building and the first skyscraper on the block with  
3 design details that we call the important architects,  
4 Chicago architect Louis Sullivan. The 21-story  
5 skyscraper represents the early space of commercial  
6 development in East Midtown when slender skyscrapers  
7 began to concentrate in the vicinity of the newly  
8 completed IRT and the Grand Central Terminal. 18 East  
9 41<sup>st</sup> continues to serve as an office building despite  
10 modest changes to the lower-lower floors and roof  
11 pediment. This visually striking structure remains  
12 one of the first and finest skyscrapers in East  
13 Midtown.

14  
15           The Hampton Shops Building is a handsome  
16 example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century skyscraper built for  
17 retail use. Located on the south side of east 50<sup>th</sup>  
18 Street near Madison Avenue it was designed by Rouse  
19 and Goldstone in association with Joseph L. Steinem.  
20 It was constructed between 1915 and 16 when this  
21 section of Midtown was being transformed into a  
22 fashionable commercial district. It replaced to row  
23 houses and was brief-briefly the only highrise  
24 structure on the block, and you can see in this 1916  
25 photo. Designed in a perpendicular Gothic style,

1 which was chosen to complement St. Patrick's  
2 Cathedral, which the building faces. It evokes the  
3 types—it also evokes the types of furniture that the  
4 store sold. Elven stories tall, the building's  
5 detailing recalls the recently completed Woolworth  
6 Building with its continuous piers and cast ornament  
7 enhancing the structure's ridicality. Hampton Shops  
8 is an expansive furniture and antique store, and even  
9 today one can see the small shields with depictions  
10 of furniture in them. Hampton Shops declared  
11 bankruptcy in 1937 and over the decades the building  
12 has attracted many design related tenants despite the  
13 installation of in-fill within the ground floor  
14 arcade and other minor alterations, the elegant main  
15 façade remains substantially intact.

17           The Yale Club of New York is a 22-story  
18 Renaissance Revival style skyscape—skyscraper at the  
19 northwest corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and East 44<sup>th</sup>  
20 Street in Manhattan. The architect was James Gamble  
21 Rogers. He graduated from Yale College in 1889. An  
22 elegant and understated New York Classical style  
23 work, the century old clubhouse was designed to serve  
24 the Yale community, and to harmonize architecturally  
25 with the Beaux-Arts style train station it adjoins.

1 The clubhouse was built on property leased from the  
2 New York Central Railroad. It stands above the  
3 railroad tracks, and was originally part of the  
4 development known as Terminal City. This corner was  
5 an ideal location opposite Grand Center, which serves  
6 New Haven where the Yale campus is located, and to  
7 the east of Midtown's Club House Row. Today, the  
8 Yale Club remains the largest private clubhouse in  
9 New York City welcoming—welcoming not only Yale  
10 alumni, but also alumni by the universities. Topped  
11 by a magnificent projecting cornice, this impressive  
12 structure stands as potent reminder of how the  
13 creation of Terminal City transforms East Midtown in  
14 the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

16 The Lombard Revival style Pershing Square  
17 Building anchors a prominent corner directly across  
18 42<sup>nd</sup> Street from Grand Central Terminal at Park  
19 Avenue. Designed by John Sloan working with staff at  
20 York and Sawyer, the building is remarkable for the  
21 important role it played in the development of the  
22 city's mass transit system, its transitional role in  
23 the history of the city's building development, its  
24 architectural contributions to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, and its  
25 exceptional terracotta cladding. The Pershing Square

1 building is also noteworthy of an integral element of  
2 the redevelopment of the Grand Central Terminal area.  
3 The building was constructed above the subway station  
4 built by the Public Services Commission after it  
5 acquired the site in 1914. That diagonal station  
6 links the older portions of the IRT line running  
7 beneath Park Avenue with a new extension of the line  
8 beneath Lexington Avenue. In constructing the new  
9 station, the Commission's engineers provided an  
10 exceptionally strong foundation that could support  
11 the weight of a 25-story building so that the site  
12 could be marketed as a development parcel once the  
13 station was complete. Development was delayed until  
14 1920 until the construction of the Pershing Square  
15 Building, which retained the subway station. Thus,  
16 this buildings' transit connections are a critical  
17 part of its history and significance. Since the  
18 building utilized subway footings that were in place  
19 when the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1916, it  
20 received a variance from the setback requirements of  
21 the law, and thus became the last tall building in  
22 New York City erected without setbacks. Instead of  
23 setbacks, it has a larger light court facing Park  
24 Avenue with tall slabs that rise straight up from the  
25

1 eighth story. Faced with granite, multi-heat brick  
2 and colorful terracotta, which was fabricated by the  
3 Atlantic Terracotta Company and designed to appear  
4 old and weathered in order to create a more artistic  
5 design. The Pershing Square Building was built with  
6 several subway entrances and direct access to Grand  
7 Central Terminal, connections that continue to  
8 provide critical transit links and are an important  
9 part of this building's significance. In order to  
10 ensure that these rail and subway connections remain  
11 viable long into the future, the Pershing Square  
12 Building's report has a statement of regulatory  
13 intent that recognized the importance of those  
14 connections and that there may be a need for  
15 potential modifications in order to ensure that these  
16 connections remain viable long into the future.

18           Designed by the noted architectural firm  
19 Sloan and Robertson, the Graybar Building was  
20 constructed between 1925 and 27. It's located on the  
21 west side of Lexington Avenue between East 43<sup>rd</sup> and  
22 East 44<sup>th</sup> Street. The 30-story Graybar Building  
23 stands directly east of Grand Central Terminal, and  
24 was one of the last structures erected in Terminal  
25 City on property above railroad tracks owned by New

1 York Central Railroad. At the south end of the  
2 building is the Graybar passage, a public concourse  
3 linking the Beaux-Arts Station to Lexington Avenue.  
4 The Graybar Building has a powerful presence on  
5 Lexington Avenue and is significant for its design  
6 particularly how skillfully the massive setbacks  
7 conform to the 1916 Zoning Resolution for the exotic  
8 decorative program at street level, and the key role  
9 I played in the development of this section of East  
10 Midtown. Of special note are the metal racks that  
11 enliven the South Portal at 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. These  
12 animals appear in the limestone relief above the  
13 windows and seem to be climbing three metal struts  
14 that support the port-portal's central marquis, and  
15 intended to be a nod to New York City's maritime  
16 past. When the Graybar Building opened in 1927, it  
17 had a major impact on this section of East Midtown.  
18 Not only did it provide Grand Central Terminal with a  
19 much needed new entrance, but it would be the first  
20 in a succession of major office buildings to rise  
21 along Lexington Avenue. Prominent early tenants  
22 included the building's architect and owner as well  
23 as Conde Nast, which published a full-page image of  
24 the publisher's new home in the March 1927 issue of  
25

1 Vanity Fair magazine. Seen on the left in the  
2 illustration is by Hugh Ferriss. Today, the Graybar  
3 Building is exceptionally well preserved after a  
4 sensitive restoration completed in 1998, and at that  
5 time at least one of the missing racks was recreated.  
6 The building still incorporates multiple train  
7 platforms as well as the broad public corridor known  
8 as Graybar Passage that connects the station with  
9 Lexington Avenue. In keeping with the agency's  
10 approaching to the Pershing Square Building the  
11 designation report includes a statement of regulatory  
12 intent that recognizes that the Graybar building is  
13 an integral part of Grand Central Terminal, and that  
14 it seeks to ensure that the importance of these  
15 transit connections are considering—are considered  
16 when evaluating future alterations.

18                   Designed by Architect Arthur Loomis

19 Harman or one of the architects of the Empire State  
20 Building and completed in 1923, the Shelton Hotel was  
21 one of the iconic buildings of the 1920s in New York  
22 and played an important role in the development of  
23 the skyscraper located on the east side of Lexington  
24 Avenue between 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Street. It's one of the  
25 premier hotels constructed along the noted Hotel



1 Alley stretch of Lexington Avenue along with the  
2 designated Waldorf Astoria and the Beverly and  
3 Lexington Hotels, and which was part of the  
4 redevelopment of this section of East Midtown that  
5 followed the opening of Grand Central Terminal and  
6 especially the Lexington Avenue Subway Line. The  
7 Shelton is significant for its soaring expression of  
8 height and how skillfully its massing is articulated,  
9 which is an embodiment of both the 1916 zoning  
10 setback requirements and also the jazz age skyline.  
11 It—it was critically acclaimed even while it was  
12 under construction, and became a mode for other tall  
13 buildings. It also is a cultural and historical  
14 significance for its association with notable  
15 residents, and events, and as the subject matter for  
16 modernist paintings and photographs. At the time it  
17 was built, the Shelton was considered the tallest  
18 hotel in the world at 31 stories. Originally built  
19 as a men's residence with 1,200 rooms, the Shelton  
20 opened its door to women in 1924. A symbol of modern  
21 New York, it became a popular residence for theater  
22 people and artists, most notably George L. Keith and  
23 Alfred Stevens, who lived in the Shelter from 1925 to  
24 36, and created important and influential work whiled  
25

1 they lived there. It's currently the New York  
2 Marriott East Side, and although there is—has been  
3 some modest alterations, the Shelton Hotel remains  
4 remarkably intact and retains its iconic form and  
5 much of its original ornament.  
6

7 Built in 1926 to 27, designed by Emory  
8 Roth in association with Silvan Beam, this 30-story  
9 hotel is one of the premier hotels constructed along  
10 the noted Hotel Alley stretch of Lexington Avenue.  
11 Located at the northeast corner of Lexington Avenue  
12 and East 50<sup>th</sup> Street, the Beverly Hotel is  
13 significant for its design with its ingenious massing  
14 and picturesque architectural details, as well as its  
15 cultural and historical significance as the home—and  
16 as the home for notable residents, and as the subject  
17 for modernist paintings and photographs. Designed by  
18 the eminent architect Emery Roth, the Beverly is a  
19 soaring tower in a neo-Romanesque style. Set on a  
20 handsome two-story arcaded limestone base largely  
21 reconstructed, the upper stories rise to a skillfully  
22 modeled series of richly embellished terracotta  
23 ornament. Its distinctive profile became a favorite  
24 subject for American artists in the 1920s including  
25 George L. Keith and Alfred Stieglitz and Charles

1 Schuler, and has been described as one of New  
2 York's most romantically styled towers, a rich  
3 ornament in the cityscape. Designed as an apartment  
4 hotel, a type that combines private apartment living  
5 with hotel services, the Beverly was marketed as a  
6 residence with social prestige and sophistication for  
7 those who want a permanent home and its luxurious  
8 surroundings. Among the prominent residents of the  
9 Beverly were Admiral Richard E. Byrd, a polar  
10 explorer, and General and Mrs. Douglas-Douglas  
11 MacArthur among others. The Beverly is largely  
12 intact and continues to serve as luxury hotel now  
13 named the Benjamin.

14  
15 Built in 1928 to 29 to the design by  
16 Schultze and Weaver this preeminent hotel-the  
17 preeminent hotel design of the-designer-design firm.  
18 Excuse me of the 1920s and '30's the Hotel Lexington  
19 is one of the premier hotels constructed along Hotel  
20 Alley stretch of Lexington Avenue. Located at the  
21 southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 48<sup>th</sup>  
22 Street, the Hotel Lexington is significant for its  
23 architecture. It was designed by the prominent  
24 architects and who skillfully masked the building to  
25 comply with the 1916 zoning requirements, and the

critical role in the development—in the development of East Midtown and Hotel Roll-Row. The Hotel Lexington was considered as the largest hotel in a major hotel chain of 52 first class hotels located in the United States and Canada. Schultze and Weaver designed a number of New York City's most prestigious hotels including the Sherry Netherlands, Pierre and Waldorf Astoria all of which are designated landmarks. Following its completion, the picturesque Hotel Lexington attracted favorable notice from critics calling it a romantic addition to Lexington Avenue. The Hotel Lexington has remained largely intact and in 1984 the base of the building, which had been previously altered was reconstructed as a modified version of the original design. Today, the Lexington is a boat-boutique hotel owned by Diamond Rock Hospitality Company, and operated by Marriott International.

The 400 Madison Avenue Building is sited on a narrow lot less than 45 feet deep and extending for a full block front between East 47<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Street on Madison Avenue. With its dramatic massing, intricate Neo-Gothic detailing, and bright expanse—expansive terracotta façade, the 400 Madison Avenue

1 Building is one of East Midtown's most striking pre-  
2 war skyscrapers. Designed by H. Craig Severance, it  
3 as completed in 1929 as the area surrounding Grand  
4 Central Terminal was experiencing a boom in  
5 skyscraper construction and transformation into one  
6 of the country's leading financial centers. The  
7 unconventional footprint made for an efficient plan,  
8 and all of its offices had street frontages, and  
9 committed first class fronts. Although smaller than  
10 most East Midtown skyscrapers at its time, the  
11 building's well lit offices and prestigious Madison  
12 Avenue address made it attractive to "business or  
13 professional men desiring small but impressive  
14 offices." It's abstracted Neo-Gothic ornament  
15 reflects the emerging influence of the Art Deco style  
16 at the end of the 1920s. Continuing in use as an  
17 office building, 400 Madison Avenue remains a well  
18 preserved visually engaging representative of East  
19 Midtown's 1920s skyline—skyscraper boom.  
20

21 Finally, in the post Grand Central era,  
22 the Commission designated one building. The former  
23 Citicorp Tower is a major example of the late 20<sup>th</sup>  
24 Century modern architecture. The complex is located  
25 in the East Midtown section of Manhattan on a block

1 bounded by Lexington Avenue, 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, Third  
2 Avenue, and 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Designed by Hugh Stubbins  
3 and Associates in association with Emery Roth and  
4 Sons, this early mixed-use complex contains three  
5 interlocking building, a 59-story office tower, a 6-  
6 story retail and office structure, and St. Peters  
7 Church. Commissioned by First City National Bank,  
8 now called Citi Bank, the 915 foot tall tower is one  
9 of New York City's most recognizable skyscrapers.  
10 Important for is slanted top, super columns that rise  
11 more than a 100 feet and generous public spaces, it  
12 plays a major role on the Manhattan skyline, and was  
13 one of the first major structures to employ energy  
14 savings techniques. The roof slants at a 45-degree  
15 angle. This conspicuous feature was initially  
16 conceived for terraced apartments, but was later  
17 reoriented to face south and considered as a platform  
18 for solar panels. Though the economic benefit of  
19 using solar panels was unfeasible in the 1970s,  
20 various energy savings strategies were adopted, some  
21 of which had a dramatic effect on the building's  
22 appearance. A pioneering effort of sustainable  
23 design, the bank estimated that the tower used 42%  
24 less energy than comparable buildings. The Citicorp  
25

1 Center also makes innovative uses of zoning  
2 incentives that provided floor area bonuses for  
3 public space including a spacious sunken plaza and  
4 various interiors that are not part of the  
5 designation. Commonly referred to as privately owned  
6 public spaces, or POPS, the layout, design and  
7 maintenance of these amenities were reviewed and  
8 approved the City Planning Commission. The Sunken  
9 Plaza, partially tucked beneath the tower was planned  
10 to enhance connections to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Street Subway  
11 Station, a heavily used transit hub that provides  
12 access to both north, south and east/west subway  
13 lines. These POPS remain under the jurisdiction of  
14 the City Planning Commission, and with its approval,  
15 have undergone alterations.  
16

17           Stubbins in consultation with the  
18 architect Edward Larrabee Barnes is also credits-  
19 credited for designing St. Peters Church. Located at  
20 the southeast corner of East 54<sup>th</sup> Street, this low-  
21 rise structure has a prismatic form, the large  
22 skylight and sloping granite walls. Dedicated in  
23 December 1977, the Church is justly famous for its'  
24 jazz ministry. Since the mid-1960s, it has sponsored  
25 such programs as Jazz Vespers, All Night Soul, Midday

1 Jazz and Jazz on the Plaza, many funerals and  
2 memorial services for prominent musicians have taken  
3 place here including events honors—honoring Felonious  
4 Monk, Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie.  
5

6           Competed at the time when few large  
7 buildings were being erected in New York City,  
8 CitiCorp Center received considerable attention from  
9 the press and architectural critics. The CitiCorp  
10 designation reports include a statement of regulatory  
11 intent, which addresses the fact that many of the  
12 building's public spaces and some of its  
13 architectural elements were designed with the  
14 approval of City Planning Commission in exchange for  
15 the granting of floor area bonuses, and they remain  
16 under their jurisdiction necessitating a coordinated  
17 review in the future that recognizes that context.

18 Thank you and I'm happy to answer questions.

19           CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you very much,  
20 and these buildings are indeed magnificent and  
21 historic buildings, and they're worthy of  
22 landmarking, and we want to thank you and your staff  
23 for a wonderful, and also we want to thank the local  
24 Council Member Dan Garodnick and the Borough  
25 President for doing a lot of work behind these



1 landmarkings. So before we ask questions, we—we'll  
2 let Council Member Dan Garodnick make a statement on  
3 this.  
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very  
6 much, Chairman Koo, and I appreciate you having a  
7 hearing and a vote on this set of 12 landmarks in  
8 East Midtown in my district, and while I appreciate  
9 the recognition of the work that the Borough  
10 President and I played in all of this, it paled in  
11 comparison, of course, to the work that the Landmarks  
12 Commission did to bring these important New York  
13 buildings and significant buildings from New York  
14 City history forward to finally get their due. So we  
15 thank them for that. I just want to say a few words  
16 about the process that brought them before the  
17 Council. As many of you may recall, when the  
18 Bloomberg Administration sought to rezone East  
19 Midtown in 2013, one of our objections was that the  
20 rezoning sought to build our future without  
21 sufficiently protecting our past. That plan would  
22 have encouraged development of new buildings without  
23 properly protecting the historic buildings in the  
24 area. Subsequently, we formed the East Midtown  
25 Steering Committee, which I had the privilege of co-

1 chairing along with the Borough President Gale  
2 Brewer. The steering committee comprised of many of  
3 the local stakeholders, representatives from the  
4 local community boards, real estate interests,  
5 landmarks advocates, urban planning advocates, we all  
6 came together and worked closely with the relevant  
7 city agencies. And as part of the steering  
8 committee's work, we encouraged the Landmarks  
9 Preservation Commission to review this area for  
10 buildings that deserved protection and to designate  
11 them before any new rezoning plan was being voted on  
12 by the City Council and they did. They put in an  
13 extraordinary amount of work, and now these 12  
14 beautiful historically important buildings will join  
15 the ranks of the protected historic resources of  
16 which our city is so rightly proud. As you saw,  
17 these buildings represent a wide swath of our  
18 heritage from the Minnie Young House, a Renaissance  
19 Revival style townhouse representing East Midtown's  
20 days as a prestigious residential enclave to the Neo-  
21 Gothic Hampton Shops building represent the area's  
22 retail history to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century modern lines of  
23 the Citicorp skyscraper representing the roots of  
24 East Midtown's current incarnation as a premier  
25

1 commercial district. These landmarks as well as all  
2 of the buildings on the last today will keep us  
3 connected to East Midtown's rich history. This  
4 process will re-honor our past even as we plan our  
5 future is how we should do planning in our city.  
6 Today's hearing represents a first, I believe. I'm  
7 not aware of any other instance where we've heard of  
8 such a large group of individual landmarks all at  
9 once. I think it is the record--

11 LISA KERSAVAGE: [interposing] Probably.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: 12 at once,  
13 and I am proud to have been part of the thoughtful  
14 planning process that got us to this day, and again,  
15 I thank the Landmark Commission, and Mr. Chairman, I  
16 thank you and all of my colleagues, and I ask for  
17 their support. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you and Council  
19 Member Dan Garodnick. I have just one question. Do  
20 have any opposition from the land owners on these  
21 individual tall buildings? I assume they're owned by  
22 corporations, right, mostly?

23 LISA KERSAVAGE: We—we did hear from some  
24 owners. Let's see, and we also had quite a bit of  
25 owner support for these, but I'll just focus on the—

1 the owners that submitted statements in opposition,  
2 and those would include the Pershing Square Building  
3 and Graybar, both of which are owned by F.L. Green,  
4 and the Beverly Hotel and the Hotel Lexington. Yes,  
5 four.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Council  
8 Member Kallos.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Just one—a quick  
10 question. So a couple of these items were put on the  
11 calendar in 2013. Others were recently—added more  
12 recently. Why weren't we able to move forward with  
13 those that were put on the calendar in 2013 before  
14 four years later? Were these part of the backlog,  
15 and what was the delay?

16 LISA KERSAVAGE: Well, I think—so these  
17 were put on the calendar—five of them were put on the  
18 calendar in 2013, the three hotels and then Pershing  
19 Square and the Gray Bar Building. They were  
20 considered, you know, part of the agency's work with  
21 the East Midtown Rezoning, and we want to make sure  
22 that they—you know, our preservation goals are in  
23 alignment with planning goals. So it seemed prudent  
24 to wait for the, you know, pending rezoning and we  
25 have worked very closely with other sister agencies

2 on our initiative. So it was really to have the best  
3 coordination between agencies on these various  
4 planning efforts.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And if we didn't  
6 vote in favor of them, we'd risk them actually  
7 getting torn down as part of the new rezoning  
8 efforts?

9 LISA KERSAVAGE: I-I, you know, I can't  
10 really speculate on what would happen if they weren't  
11 designated. You know, I think that the commission  
12 has designated them, and we're discussing these  
13 things today.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: [interposing] And  
15 does this represent the full breadth of what we're  
16 planning for landmarking in East Midtown or are there  
17 other buildings that will be coming that might be  
18 just as meritable or important?

19 LISA KERSAVAGE: So what we presented  
20 with these 12 building is our-is our initiative, our  
21 Greater East Midtown Initiative that we, you know,  
22 developed with the steering-you know, in response to  
23 the Steering Committee and the Council Members'  
24 recommendations, and we're very pleased with it. It  
25 certainly doesn't preclude the agency from

2 designating other buildings. Just this morning we had  
3 a hearing for the Waldorf Astoria-Waldorf-Astoria  
4 interiors. We-the Commission designated Bergdorf  
5 Goodman. So, you know, this is a clear initiative  
6 with clear goals connected to the rezoning but it-it  
7 doesn't hamper the commission's future actions.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Levin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Just a-a quick  
11 comment and offer my congratulations to Council  
12 Member Garodnick and Borough President Brewer, and to  
13 the Landmarks Commission for this very ambitious set  
14 of landmark designations. It's my opinion that all  
15 of these buildings are worthy of landmark  
16 designation. They're beautiful buildings and they  
17 span almost a century of architecture in-in East  
18 Midtown, and they're important to maintaining the-the  
19 wonderful character of East Midtown. A quick  
20 question. Is-is the Citicorp building would-would  
21 that be the newest or like the most recently built  
22 landmark in the city of New York if it was  
23 designated?

24 LISA KERSAVAGE: At the moment it is.

25 Well, actually no, we just recently last week

1 designated Ambassador Grill, which actually it's an  
2 interior, but just slightly later.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay,

5 LISA KERSAVAGE: Or part of it was built  
6 in the '80s, but as an exterior landmark, an  
7 individual landmark, it is Citicorp.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Great. Okay, thank  
9 you and I look forward to voting, too. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any more questions?  
11 No. So, we'll close, yeah. You know, we're—we're  
12 closing the LPC really. Thank you.

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Now, yes. We have one  
15 speaker from the public, Andrea Golden from the  
16 Landmarks Conservancy. [background comments, pause]

17 ANDREA GOLDEN: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Can you do this in a  
19 few minutes. Yeah, because we have all—all have a  
20 meeting to go.

21 ANDREA GOLDEN: Good day, Chair Koo and  
22 Council Members. I'm Andrea Golden speaking for the  
23 Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is very  
24 pleased to support designation of the 12 landmarks  
25 being heard today. We thank the parties involved in

1 the Midtown East Rezoning Initiative including the  
2 Mayor, Department of City Planning, Landmarks  
3 Commission, Borough President Brewer and especially  
4 Council Member Garodnick for their recognition of the  
5 significant historic architecture of the area. We  
6 have statements on each building from the LPC  
7 hearings, which are distributed, but we'll focus  
8 testimony on the Pershing Square and Graybar  
9 buildings. These date to the Grand Central Era when  
10 the construction of grand Central Terminal catalyzed  
11 commercial development, and like many of the 12  
12 landmarks today, are eligible for listing on the  
13 National Register of Historic places. The 1923  
14 Pershing Square building with its tapestry like  
15 façade and ornate decorative elements is among the  
16 most beautiful sights in Midtown and worthy of  
17 designation for its history and architecture. The  
18 Romanesque Revival Tower features round arched  
19 windows and tiled tipped roofs, forming a lovely  
20 complement to Grand Central. One of the last tall  
21 buildings without setbacks it rises straight up 24  
22 stories on top of footings that were built as part as  
23 part of the IRT subway lines before setback  
24 requirements enacted in 1916. Since the footings  
25



1 could not support the setback buildings, the site  
2 received a variance and a unique place in New York  
3 architectural and planning history. In 1927, Graybar  
4 Building is essential to Midtown East. It's one of  
5 the last remnants of Terminal City, a series of  
6 structures built to complement Grand Central  
7 Terminal. It's intertwined with the terminal itself,  
8 built over the train tracks with a concourse that  
9 provides direct access to the trains and the station.  
10 Name for an original tenant it's an emblem of New  
11 York's commercial growth in the era between the wars  
12 and upon completion it boasted one million square  
13 feet of office space, the largest office building in  
14 the world. The rezoning proposal for Midtown East  
15 will substantially increase development pressures  
16 across this area especially in the blocks closest to  
17 Grand Central. We will likely face the loss of  
18 numerous masonry clad buildings of the pre-war era.  
19 We remind you that it's the mix of old and new that  
20 keeps New York a dynamic, interesting and unique  
21 city. These landmarks are irreplaceable gems and an  
22 essential part of that mix. We urge you to affirm  
23 their designation of these remarkable buildings.  
24 Thank you.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, any  
3 questions from all our members. No. Thank you very  
4 much. Are there any other members of the public who  
5 wish to testify? Seeing none, I will now close the  
6 public hearing on these applications. I will now  
7 couple these 12 applications for a vote to approve.  
8 Counsel, please call the roll.

9 LEGAL COUNSEL: Chair, a vote—vote on  
10 Preconsidered LUs 20175160 HKM, 32017516012 HKM.  
11 Chair Koo.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Palma.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Barron.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I vote aye.

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: The 12 Preconsidered LUs  
22 are approved by a vote of 5 in the affirmative, 0 in  
23 the negative and 0 abstentions and referred to the  
24 full Land Use Committee.  
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND  
2 MARITIME USES

35

3 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Thank you  
4 members of the public, my colleagues, counsel and  
5 members of the staff. This meeting is adjourned.

6 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 31, 2017