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Rendering of proposed development along 126th Street, Willets Point. Image Credit: EDC.

## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Text Amendment/Special Permits  
Willets Point, Queens

### Willets Point Proposal Heard at City Planning Commission

*23-acre proposal will include environmental cleanup, expressway ramps, affordable housing, and retail and entertainment complex.* The City Planning Commission held a public hearing on land use actions to facilitate Phase 1 of the [Willets Point Development Project](#) on July 10, 2013. The application was submitted by the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the Queens Development Group, LLC, a joint venture of Sterling Equities and Related Companies. Phase 1, to be split into Phase 1A and 1B, includes environmental cleanup, economic improvements, mixed use developments, parking, and infrastructure improvements on a portion of the 61-acre [Special Willets Point](#)

[District](#) in Queens on the west and east sides of Citi Field, home of the New York Mets.

The Special Willets Point District was [approved](#) by the City Council in 2008. The rezoning was controversial; area businesses and residents were concerned over the relocation of businesses, the possibility of eminent domain, and traffic congestion. As a result, a [lawsuit](#) was filed against the City by business owners and residents but was dismissed by the New York County Supreme Court in 2010. EDC published a [request for proposals](#) in May 2011, asking developers to propose plans for Phase 1 of the development. In June 2012, Mayor Michael Bloomberg [announced](#) that the City had come to an agreement with the Queens Development Group for Phase 1 of the development plans.

As proposed in the plan, Phase 1A is scheduled to begin in 2014 with environmental remediation of, and demolition of the existing structures on, a 23-acre section of the Special Willets *(cont'd on page 93)*

## The Court has ruled on street hails: now let's work together

The Bloomberg administration successfully defended the 2013 state law authorizing outer borough street hail taxi service and the sale of additional yellow cab medallions for wheel chair accessible vehicles. The battles over the state law and other taxi policies have left the industry and its TLC regulators deeply divided and distrustful of each other. Divorce is not possible, so the industry and the regulators still have to find ways to achieve the goals they share: a viable, safe and fair yellow cab and car service industry.

The TLC and the industry's unsuccessful attempts to find a middle ground on key issues led to litigation and delays. The street hail law is a prime example. There are areas outside of Manhattan where street hails make complete economic sense, but there are much larger areas where only base-managed liveries can economically operate. The state law opens all areas for street hails by up to 18,000 cars. Approaches other than the state law would not have been as challenging to the taxi and livery industry. Neither the industry nor the City was well served by the resulting battle.

A primary shared goal is the need to expand and protect the yellow cab industry. The medallion system created massive investment expectations. But it also created massive economic incentives for owners and drivers to stay on the road and serve the traveling public. Demand for yellow cabs exceeds supply, a growth spurred by new residential and commercial neighborhoods, and tourism. If the numbers of yellow cabs had grown in keeping with demand, yellow cabs would be pushing into the territories previously occupied by the liveries, rather than the liveries pushing into the yellow cab territory. More yellow medallions would provide safer and fairer service, and also protect the value of the medallions already issued.

Traffic is another shared goal. The Bloomberg administration has been enormously creative in adapting street space for pedestrian and bicycle use, but little of that attention has been focused on taxi speeds, curb access and taxi lines. Street scrambles for taxis still exist. More attention to how traffic affects taxis would serve both safety and fairness.

It is time for the industry and the City to begin to work together. That is what the traveling public needs.

Ross Sandler

<b>CITYLAND</b>			
Ross Sandler <i>Professor of Law and Director, Center for New York City Law</i>	Drew Carroll '12 Amber Gonzalez '12 <i>Fellows</i>	Jesse Denno <i>Staff Writer, Production Asst.</i>	<p>.....</p> <p>The Center expresses appreciation to the individuals and foundations supporting the Center and its work: The Steven and Sheila Aresty Foundation, Fund for the City of New York, The Durst Foundation, The Charina Endowment Fund, The Murray Goodgold Foundation, Jerry Gottesman, The Marc Haas Foundation and The Prospect Hill Foundation.</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>CITYLAND</b> (ISSN 1551-711X) is published by the Center for New York City Law at New York Law School, 185 West Broadway, New York City, New York 10013, tel. (212) 431-2115, fax (212) 941-4735, e-mail: nycitylaw@nyls.edu, website: www.citylaw.org © Center for New York City Law, 2012. All rights reserved. Printed on recycled paper. Maps presented in <b>CITYLAND</b> are from Map-PLUTO copyrighted by the New York City Department of City Planning. City Landmarks and Historic Districts printed with permission of New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.</p> <p>POSTMASTER: Send address changes to <b>CITYLAND</b>, 185 West Broadway, New York, New York 10013-2921. Periodicals postage paid at New York, New York.</p>
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Point District. Much of the site is currently occupied by junkyards and automotive repair businesses. The contamination of the site includes ash, which was historically dumped there, petroleum, and various vehicle fluids. The district lacks sanitary sewers and adequate storm sewers. The district is also on a 100-year flood plain and is adjacent to the Flushing Bay, which makes grade changes a necessary component of redevelopment. After remediation is complete, in approximately 2015, the Queens Development Group would develop 30,000 sq.ft. of ground floor retail and a 200-room hotel on 126th Street, on the eastern side of Citi Field. Temporary surface parking with approximately 2,833 spaces for Citi Field attendants would surround the development. During the baseball off-season, the parking area would be used for active recreational space such as basketball courts and a driving range. By 2016, Phase 1A would continue with development of a 1.4 million square foot entertainment and retail structure on a Citi Field parking lot west of the stadium. The existing spaces would be relocated to areas south of the stadium. Phase 1A would be completed in 2018.

In the interim between Phase 1A and 1B and beginning in 2021, the City has committed to fund construction of new Van Wyck Expressway ramps where the expressway crosses Northern Boulevard to be completed in 2024.

Phase 1B would begin in 2025 and completed by 2028. The Queens Development Group would expand the development along 126th Street to form a mixed-use neighborhood, roughly bordered by 126th Street, 35th Avenue, 127th Street, and Roosevelt Avenue. The development would include 2,490 units of housing, 35 percent of which would be affordable, 905,000 sq.ft. of retail, 500,000 sq.ft. of office space, 25,000 sq.ft. of community facility space, and an additional 290 hotel rooms. The neighborhood would also fea-

ture a new public school and more than six acres of publicly accessible open space.

The applicants seek a zoning text amendment to the Special Willets Point District regulations that would allow for the planned recreational, hotel, and retail uses in the parking areas via the use of special permits.

Queens Borough President, Helen M. Marshall recommended approval of the proposal with conditions, asking for regular progress meetings between the community boards, borough president, and the developer, and various commitments to affordable housing, ramp work, and local hiring practices. Queens Community Board 7 approved the application with conditions as well, requesting water testing, traffic mitigation, and a sooner construction time for the ramps. Queens Community Board 3 disapproved the application because it disagreed with the use of parkland for a mall and delayed construction of the affordable housing component.

At the City Planning Commission hearing on July 10, 2013, Robert F. Goldrich, Senior Policy Advisor to Deputy Mayor Robert K. Steel answered questions from the commissioners concerning the relocation of existing businesses. Goldrich testified that the City is working with local Council Member Julissa Ferreras, the EDC, and the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development to plan for relocation. He said that the City has successfully acquired about 95 percent of the properties on the 23-acre portion to be developed during Phase 1, which includes approximately 100 businesses that will have to relocate. He said the City hopes to reach agreements with the remaining five percent of properties and not acquire the properties through the use of eminent domain. David Quart, Senior Vice President of Development at the EDC testified that in order for Willets Point to be successful, de-

velopment must come in planned phases. First, environmental clean-up is needed, then, the retail and hotel development will be the first economic drivers for the area. Only after an income stream is generated can the residential component be developed. He also testified that although the area is parkland, all of the uses in the proposal are allowed by the Special Willets Point District.

The proposal awaits a decision by the City Planning Commission, and then will be sent to the City Council for approval.

.....  
CPC: Willets Point Development Project (N 130220 ZRQ – text amendment); (C 130222 ZSQ – special permit); (C 130223 ZSQ – special permit); (C 130224 ZSQ – special permit); (C 130225 ZSQ – special permit) (July 10, 2013).

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## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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Rezoning/UDAAP

Kips Bay, Manhattan

### City Planning Commission Hears AdAPT NYC Micro-Unit Proposal

*City's proposed micro-unit pilot program criticized for lack of permanently affordable housing.* On July 24, 2013, the City Planning Commission held a hearing on the City's first micro-unit building, part of the Mayor's [adAPT NYC program](#). The development will serve as a pilot program to test the viability and marketability of 250- to 360-square-foot units in a single building. The City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development proposed the plan to be built at [335 East 27th Street](#) in Manhattan by [Monadnock Construction](#) and [nARCHITECTS](#). The ten-story development will contain 55 pre-fabricated one- to two-person residential units; 22 units will be affordable for a period of 30 years and the rest will be available at market rates. The micro-units will have a studio-style design with a toolbox zone (kitchen, bathroom, and storage space) and a





Rendering of micro-unit interior. On the left, the canvas space, and on the right, the toolbox space. Image Credit: Office of the Mayor.

canvas zone, which will be an open space for eating and sleeping. (Read *CityLand*'s past coverage [here](#).)

At the City Planning Commission's hearing on July 24, 2013, Jennifer Gardner, representing [Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer](#), testified as to the borough president's overall approval of the proposal. However, the borough president called for permanent or longer-term affordability and requested that the applicants and HPD develop an appropriate set of metrics and surveys for measuring the success of the program in terms of marketability, livability, and quality.

Kirk Goodrich, Director of Development at Monadnock, testified that the building's foundation and facade will be constructed on the development site, while the modular units will be built by [Capsys](#) at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He expects the entire building to be built in 13 months from start to finish. Goodrich discussed some minor modifications to the building's layout — instead of common areas on every floor as previously proposed, the eighth floor will have both an outdoor terrace and an indoor salon space open to all tenants. He testified that the ground floor will have 670 sq.ft. of commercial space, which Monadnock expects will be occupied by a cafe. Monadnock is committed to prohibiting bars or other alcohol-related establish-

ments from the commercial space because of [Manhattan Community Board 6's](#) concerns. In response to the Commissioner's questions about permanent affordability, Goodrich testified that Monadnock will continue to work with the City to find subsidies or tax abatements that could help the development achieve more than 30 years of affordability or affordability in perpetuity. He also testified that the company was developing success measurements, one of which would be exit surveys of tenants.

Moses Gates of the [Association for Neighborhood Housing and Development](#) testified concerning the affordability of the units. Though he found the proposal interesting, he testified that the level and length of affordability could be improved to serve the poorer households of New York City. He called the proposed rent levels a slight discount off the market rate in one of NYC's most expensive rental markets. He suggested that the building's market rate units and the market rate commercial space in such a lucrative area could cross-subsidize permanent affordable units.

The City Planning Commission closed the hearing and will have 60 days to vote on the proposal.

.....  
CPC: adAPT NYC – 335 East 27th Street (130235 ZMM – rezoning); (130236 HAM – UDAAP and disposition) (July 24, 2013).

## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Designation

SoHo, Manhattan

### Jacques Ely Kahn-Designed Manufacturing Building City's Newest Individual Landmark

*Modern classical structure, completed in 1930, was built as part of an industrial development of the area following the opening of the Holland Tunnel.* On August 6, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate the Holland Plaza Building, at [75 Varick Street](#) in Manhattan, as an individual landmark. The 1930 building was designed by Jacques Ely Kahn, a prolific New York-based architect who was also responsible for the [Municipal Asphalt Plant](#), and the interior of the [Film Center Building](#), both designated as City landmarks. The structure occupies an irregular, triangle-shaped block bounded by Varick, Canal and Watts Streets.

The building stands at 18 stories tall, and is characterized by its stark structural grid.

Developer Abe Adelson, a frequent patron of Kahn's, commissioned the building. The neighborhood underwent a period of rapid industrial growth when the Holland Tunnel, which opened in



The Holland Plaza Building, 75 Varick Street, Manhattan. Image Credit: LPC.



Holland Plaza entrance. Image Credit: LPC.

1929, made the area a transportation hub. The early Modern building clearly reads as industrial, with little external ornamentation. The building's style comes from emphasis on its structural grid with its interplay of masonry vertical piers and horizontal textured spandrels, projecting rusticated piers at the pedestrian entrances.

At the June 11, 2013 public hearing, Jason Pizer, President of [Trinity Real Estate](#), which owns the property, testified in support of designation of building. He called the building the "flagship" of Trinity's commercial property. Pizer noted that the area had recently [been re-zoned](#) at Trinity's impetus, which imposed height restrictions in the area. He also noted that their offices in the Holland Plaza Building

were LEED gold-certified. The [Historic Districts Council's](#) Nadezhda Williams called the building one of Kahn's "great works," and "an important chapter in 20th century New York City architecture."

At the August 6, 2013 Landmarks meeting, Commissioners were unanimous in voting to designate the building. Vice Chair Pablo Vengoechea called the structure "a great building by a great architect," while Commissioner Michael Devonshire said its "architectonics are just remarkable." Commissioner Michael Goldblum found that the building managed to merge European and American architecture of its era, drawing on both Viennese decorative precedents and American engineering. Chair Robert B. Tierney called the building a "masterpiece," thanked Trinity for its cooperation, and said the designation was the product of a "constructive partnership" with the organization.

LPC: [Holland Plaza Building](#), 75 Varick Street, Manhattan (LP-2537) ([Aug. 6, 2013](#)).

## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Certificate of Appropriateness  
Greenwich Village, Manhattan

### Proposal for New Seven-Story Building Stirs Controversy

*Application seeks to replace one-story structure with new residential, ground-floor retail building.* On July 9, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on a proposal to demolish a building at [130 Seventh Avenue South](#) in the [Greenwich Village Historic District](#), and build a new seven-story building at the site. According to Landmarks' district [designation report](#), the existing building was constructed in 1937 after the southern extension of Seventh Avenue, to the designs of the firm Scacchetti & Siegel. The subject lot is triangular in shape, created by the construction





Renderings of proposed mixed-use building at 130 Seventh Avenue South, Manhattan.  
Image Credit: Gruzen Samton Architects.

of Seventh Avenue. The building would be residential, with ground-floor retail.

Jane Gol, president of [Continental Ventures Realty](#), which is developing the site in conjunction with the Keystone Group, testified that the plan was as-of-right and would be “sensitive to the distinctive nature and character of the Greenwich Village neighborhood.”

She said the building would serve to restore the residential character of Seventh Avenue South, and the building would meld with the neighboring townhouses.

The plan was presented by [Gruzen Samton](#)’s Peter Samton, and architect Robert Santos. Samton characterized the existing structure as “taxpayer” without an identifiable architectural style, and

Santos said that it had been altered repeatedly since its construction. Santos added that the building was anomalous in an area largely characterized by three- and five-story residential structures.

The proposed building would rise to five stories at the streetwall, with the overall height in line with historic tenement buildings in the district. A two-story penthouse, set back slightly from the front facade, would be faced by a glass curtain wall. The masonry portion would possess large casement windows, adding an industrial component to the building’s design. The lower five stories would be primarily clad in red brick, a material common to the district. The western edge of the building would be faced in glass; a design element Samton said was intended to recall the impact of Seventh Avenue South on the street grid of Greenwich Village. The building would have projecting balconies on the north facade, and Juliet balconies on the south. The building would rise to a total height of 75 feet.

Landmarks heard numerous residents and others testify both in support of and in opposition to the plan. The [Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation](#)’s Amanda Davis argued that the proposal “attempts to fit too much onto such a small, irregular lot,” and that the project should be scaled down and redesigned in a manner more harmonious to the district. Preservation consultant [Gregory Dietrich](#), retained by the Compact for Urban Site Preservation, testified that the existing building possessed historic and architectural interest, as an example of “vernacular Moderne style,” and should be protected. Dietrich further testified that the proposal would have “an adverse visual effect” on the historic district. Resident Henry Landau called the proposed building an “out-of-scale, out-of-style monolith,” while neighbor Alan Fried said the design would be more appropriate to DUMBO, and that the proposal’s size threat-

## Building a New Pennsylvania Station for the 21st Century



The decision to demolish Penn Station nearly 50 years ago haunts New York City today as we grapple with the need to expand our rail transit capacity in the 21st century. The current version of Penn Station, pinned beneath Madison Square Garden, is not merely an unsightly

and unwelcoming entrance to our City, it is an overburdened facility that is incapable of being expanded with Madison Square Garden at its current location. That is why I am convinced that Madison Square Garden must move.

Ensuring that Penn Station could be modernized to meet future transit demands was the key issue facing my office when we recently reviewed Madison Square Garden’s request for a permit in perpetuity to continue operating in its present location. After an intensive review, I endorsed a 10-year permit and also [recommended](#) that we begin steps to relocate Madison Square Garden to a nearby site to pave the way for a badly-needed expansion of Penn Station. Fifty years ago, the station accommodated 200,000 daily passengers. Today it serves over 650,000—and the total will swell in future years.

There is a growing consensus that we must launch a city, state and federal effort to implement a Moynihan-Penn Station Master Plan that will spur economic development in Midtown and clear the way for rail transit improvements in the nation’s busiest rail hub.

No one disputes the economic contributions which Madison Square Garden makes to New York City. Its more than 400 annual events draw 3.6 million guests each year and it employs 5,800 people. The Garden’s total direct and indirect impact from

employment and spending totals \$527.9 million each year. But these benefits cannot overshadow the physical constraints it places on a crucial part of the city’s infrastructure.

Plans to expand mass transit along the Northeast Corridor with new trans-Hudson connections and in the upgrading of high-speed rail will directly affect Penn Station. To facilitate that growth we need to expand the station’s 21 tracks and 11 platforms, which have an average width of 21 feet, to accommodate additional traffic from New Jersey, Long Island, Westchester, and the entire Eastern Seaboard.

But the tracks cannot be expanded without removing the support pillars and columns of Madison Square Garden, which extend all the way down to the track level. The Garden is literally an obstacle to the realization of a 21st century Penn Station.

For all these reasons, it is time to move Madison Square Garden and build a station that will further encourage rail transit use, reduce driving into the city, create thousands of jobs and spur business growth. This is hardly a new idea: Over the past decade there have been several plans to move Madison Square Garden to another Midtown site—plans in which the Garden was a willing participant. With the expansion of Penn Station more important than ever, we must find a new location for the arena.

We will pave the way for transit-oriented development that will revitalize West Midtown, and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of tri-state commuters and the millions more who visit New York City every year.

— Scott M. Stringer

*Scott M. Stringer is Manhattan Borough President.*

ened the low-rise character of the district. One neighbor said the glass penthouse would look like “a flying saucer” when illuminated at night. Other speakers expressed concern about the development’s impact on trees growing on the lot, the loss of light and air to nearby apartments, and the increase in traffic that the development would bring to the area.

Resident Evan Hollander said the proposal, if built, “will bring vibrancy to that corner,” and that the avenue location could sustain

the project’s height. Resident Ken Brandman said the existing building had hosted a series of failed businesses, remained vacant for long periods of time, and done nothing beneficial for the community. Several other residents echoed these testimonies.

Samton responded to the testimony by saying existing trees would be protected and incorporated into the plan, and reiterated that whatever architectural distinction the existing building may have once had, was already lost through repeated

alterations. Jane Gol said the proposal was “modest” in the context of Seventh Avenue South. She thanked residents for commenting, and said the owners would seek to address their concerns at a later meeting.

Since the hearing extended past the Landmarks meeting’s scheduled end time, Chair Robert B. Tierney closed the hearing without commissioner comments. Chair Tierney said a meeting to revisit the proposal would be scheduled soon.

.....  
LPC: 130 Seventh Avenue South, Man-



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## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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Certificate of Appropriateness

Upper West Side, Manhattan

### Proposed Two-Story Addition to UWS Building Criticized by Commissioners

*Applicants testified that seven-story building was originally conceived as rising to nine stories, and that a two-story addition was approved in the 1890s.* The Landmarks Preservation Commission considered an application to construct a two-story plus bulkhead addition atop the Evelyn, an apartment building at [101 West 78th Street](#) in the [Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District](#), on July 23, 2013. The 1886 seven-story Renaissance Revival apartment building stands at the corner of Columbus Avenue, across the street from the American Museum of Natural History. The proposal also included the installation of an access lift at the main residential entrance, which would necessitate the removal of some historic fabric.

The proposed addition would be clad in zinc, while a brick bulkhead would rise an additional story. Glass railings would surround the accessible rooftop areas. Portions of the addition would be visible from multiple viewpoints from public thoroughfares.

Preservation consultant Bill Higgins of [Higgins Quasebarth & Partners](#), speaking for the applicants, testified that the building was originally planned to be eight stories with a mansard, but the developers “ran out of money.” A two-story addition later received permits but was never realized. In 1893 a one-story addition received a building permit, and was apparently commenced, but there are no photographs, or existing remains. In a separate application to be approved by Landmarks



Rendering of the proposed two-story addition at 101 West 78th Street, Manhattan.  
Image Credit: [Montroy Andersen DeMarco](#).

staff, Higgins said that the owners also intend to restore the building. The restoration would refurbish the facade and restore decorative elements at the roof level, including a cornice and columns, which have been lost over time. Higgins concluded that the building was always meant to be taller, and the addition was in the “context of history.”

[Margaret Streicker Porres](#), President of Newcastle Realty Services, which recently purchased the property, further emphasized that the addition “mimics the original intention” for the building. She said the addition would be used for a residential apartment. Architect Richard DeMarco of the firm [Montroy Andersen Demarco](#) said the additional stories would have floor-to-

ceiling heights of ten feet, six inches. The first added story would have a floor area of 7,500 square feet, while the second added floor would be 2,800 square feet.

A representative of Manhattan Community Board 7 recommended denial of the addition, calling it “overbearing and out of scale,” and objected to the planned materials. Council Member [Gale Brewer](#) echoed the Community Board’s assessment by a letter to the commission. A representative of Assembly Member [Linda Rosenthal](#) testified that her office had been “inundated with concerns,” that the proposed addition “sharply clashed” with the existing architecture, and did not conform to the “essential character” of the neighborhood. An Evelyn



## Public Access to Public Open Space

New York City routinely permits private property owners to acquire public land without paying for it. Does that shock you? It should! Let me explain how this happened.

In 1961 the Board of Estimate approved a new Zoning Resolution in which the public obtained access to and use of privately-owned open space in exchange for permitting certain owners to build additional floor area inside their building. For four decades people routinely used what became public open space. That changed quite dramatically after foreign terrorists crashed two airplanes into the World Trade Center.

In the aftermath of September 11th property owners began to worry about protecting their buildings from possible terrorist attacks. If they were not worried, their



Public plaza at 140 Broadway, Manhattan in 1997. Image Credit: Alexander Garvin.

insurance companies were and demanded that they provide protection. In some cases the request for additional security came from the NYC Police Department. In no case, however, could anybody specify the form of that attack. Nor did they devise actions that protected against airplanes penetrating their property. The unspecified attack was expected to come from individuals or vehicles.

Owners began to believe that property protection could be purchased by erecting planters, bollards, and other obstructions to easy access to their buildings. Those obstructions were erected on property, which they had agreed to open to the public in exchange for being permitted to build additional revenue-producing floor area inside their buildings. Thus, without government permission or scrutiny, property owners have reduced and continue to reduce the amount of public space they are required to provide.

Worse yet, property owners are making it increasingly difficult to gain access to public space by taking possession of substantial amounts of public sidewalk (which they do not own) on which they have erected further obstructions in the form of heavy planters and

bulky bollards. As a result, when the subways are not in service (as happened during super storm Sandy), it becomes difficult for the increased numbers of pedestrians to pass through supposedly public space quickly and conveniently.

I do not wish to get into an argument over the need to provide building security or the effectiveness of means property owners have chosen to provide that security. My solution is simple. Property owners have appropriated public property for private use. In exchange for taking this property, they should pay rent to the City of New York. The amount of rent should be



Public plaza at 140 Broadway in 2005. Image Credit: Alexander Garvin.

calculated by determining the amount of floor area this open space permitted them to build (based on the Floor Area Ratio of the zoning district in which the property is located). The payment to the city for that floor area should be equal to the average price per square foot that they are charging in rent to building occupants.

Once private owners have to pay for using public property, I believe they will begin to eliminate planters and bollards that are not needed to provide security to building occupants. More important, the public will either regain the benefit of the open space it paid for by allowing added noise, traffic, and density to city streets and sidewalks or enjoy the cash payments they have earned by allowing private use of public space by building owners.

— Alexander Garvin

*Alexander Garvin is an Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning and Management at Yale University and is the President & CEO of Alex Garvin & Associates, Inc.*

tenant said the building would be “desecrated” by the addition, and likened the design to “a rooftop bus terminal.” Numerous other area residents decried the addition’s bulk and visibility, and other neighbors said the addition would negatively affect the reach of light and air to their dwellings. Landmark West! submitted testimony that asked Landmarks to consider the addition’s visibility in context with its neighbors, the Theodore Roosevelt Park and the American Museum of Natural History, “We urge the Commission to reject the rooftop addition, as this building has a roofplate large enough to build without being visible.”

Higgins responded to testimony objecting to the design by saying that sheet metal was common material for the facades of additions in the late 19th century.

Commissioner Michael Goldblum said the Evelyn was a “very important building to the district,” and that the proposal was a long way from being approvable. Goldblum criticized the presentation for failing to show all sightlines from which the addition would be visible, and found the second story of the addition and the prominent bulkhead problematic. Commissioner Roberta Washington found the visibility of the proposal needed to be greatly reduced, and that the plan would probably need to discard the second story of the addition and the bulkhead. Commissioner Fred Bland also determined that any addition needed to be less visible and further set back from the front facade. Bland suggested that a mansard roof might be a more appropriate form for an addition to the Evelyn.

Chair Robert B. Tierney concurred with the commissioners’ statements, and asked the applicants to substantially rethink the plan before returning to Landmarks with a revised proposal at a later date.

LPC: 101 West 78th Street, Manhattan (14-4161) ([July 23, 2013](#)) (Architect: Montroy Andersen DeMarco).



Current vacant lot at 74 Grand Street, Manhattan. *Image Credit: Google.*

## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Certificate of Appropriateness

SoHo, Manhattan

### New SoHo Building with Salvaged Facade Approved

*New seven-story building in vacant SoHo lot approved after changes in architect and height.* On August 6, 2013, Landmarks approved the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness for the construction of a new residential building at [74 Grand Street](#) in the [SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District](#). The site was [previously](#) the location of a six-story 1886 neo-Grec store-and-loft building. The building was demolished with [Landmarks’ approval](#) in 2009 after it was destabilized by nearby construction work. The owners agreed to dismantle, catalogue, and store the building’s original cast-iron facade for its eventual reinstallation in a new structure at the site.

At a [March 2013 public hearing](#), applicants proposed a plan by [Bone/Levine Architects](#) for a new eight-story-plus-penthouse building. The restored cast-iron facade would be installed approximately eight feet in front of the new build-

ing’s glass curtain wall, attached by a steel armature. The historic facade’s window opening would not align with the floors of the new structure. Representatives of Manhattan Community Board 2 and preservationist organizations spoke in strong opposition to the proposal. Commissioners also determined that the historic facade needed to be better integrated into the new building, and asked the applicants to return at a later date with a revised proposal.

At Landmarks’ June 11 meeting, a new proposal was presented by a new design team from [C3D Architecture](#). Principal Paul Freitas presented the plan, in which the historic facade would be fully attached to the new structure, and windows and doors would be installed in the openings of the cast iron facade. The top two stories of the new eight-story building would be set back twelve feet from the front facade; additional stories would be faced in zinc with glass fiber reinforced sidewalls. The sidewalls of the lower floors would be clad in red brick, and metal balconies would be installed on the rear facade.

Commissioners found the new plan generally appropriate, though some lamented the loss of architec-



tural ambition from the initial proposal. Commissioner Margery Perlmutter found the building slightly too tall, though otherwise approvable, but expressed regret that the designers felt they “had to retreat to something conventional.” Commissioners Roberta Washington and Michael Devonshire said the building should be reduced by one story. Commissioner Michael Goldblum agreed that the project was “appropriate, if uninspiring.” Commissioner Fred Bland said he would not oppose the plan, but found it an “opportunity lost” to “interpret an extraordinary story.” Commissioner Diana Chapin found the proposal “attractive” and supported approval.

Commissioner Libby Ryan, who chaired the meeting, asked the applicants to work to reduce the project’s height and return once more to Landmarks.

At the Commission’s August 6 meeting, the revisions were presented by Landmarks staff. The building’s design remained the same, but with one of the set back stories removed. A bulkhead would be partially visible from street viewpoints. Chair Robert B. Tierney said the project had “come a long way” and that the applicants had successfully addressed the issue of height. Landmarks voted unanimously to award the plan a certificate of appropriateness.

LPC: 74 Grand Street, Manhattan (14-0893) (Aug. 6, 2013) (Architect: C3D Architecture).

## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Designation Hearing  
Midtown, Manhattan

### Opulent Piano Retail Space Considered as a Potential Interior Landmark

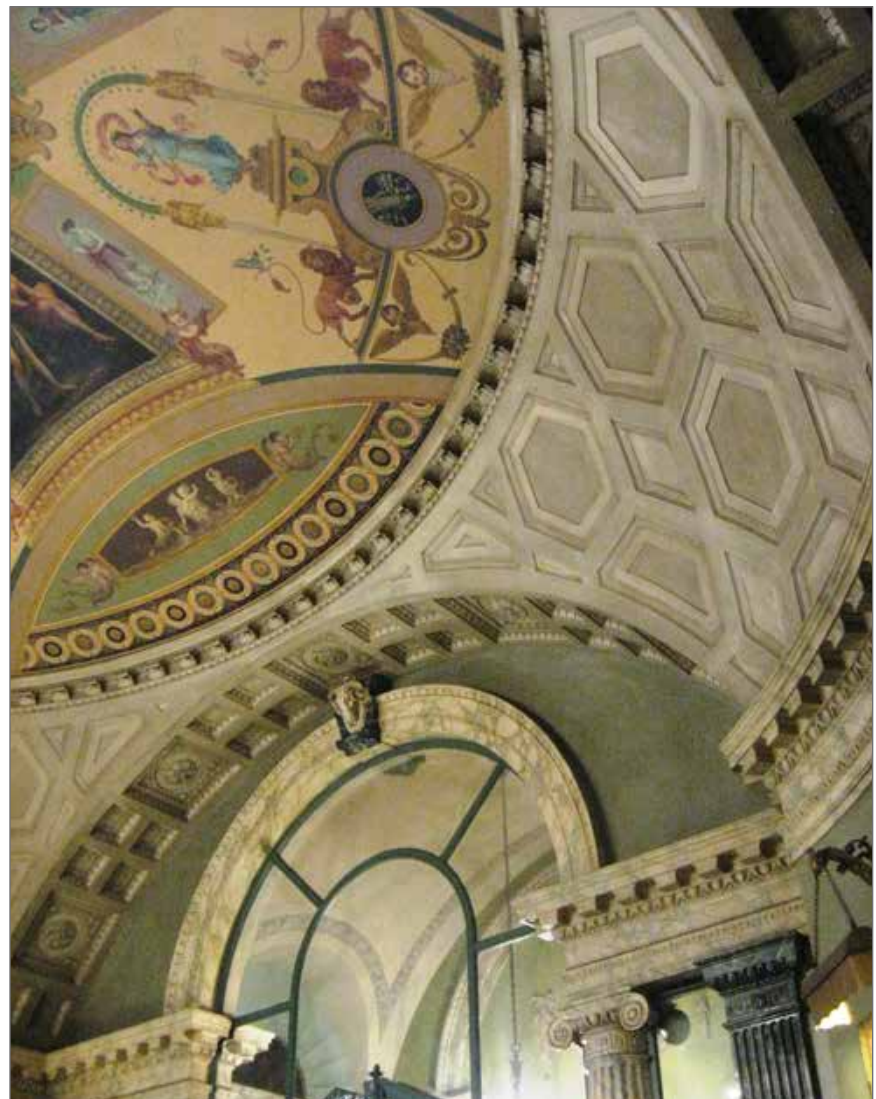
*Owner’s representative expressed support for designation; testified that landmark would be preserved in context of planned larger development.* On July 23, 2013, the

Landmarks Preservation Commission held a hearing on the potential designation of the reception room and adjoining rooms and hallways of the Steinway & Sons retail space at [109 West 57th Street](#) in Manhattan. The neo-Renaissance interior was completed in 1928 to designs by the firm of Warren & Wetmore. Warren & Wetmore was the architecture firm behind several other City landmarks, including the interior of [Grand Central Terminal](#).

The primary interior space is an octagonal double-height rotunda, in which customers were met by sales representatives before entering the showrooms. The room features a crystal chandelier and alle-

gorical paintings, by Swiss-Austrian painter Angelica Kauffman, adorn the domed ceiling. The room is visible from the street through large display windows. A foyer on the 57th Street entrance possesses white marble arches on Ionic columns on its four walls. Though some rooms are separated by glass or glazed infill, the interior reads as one continuous space.

Michael Stern, Managing Partner of JDS Development Group, testified that the ownership enthusiastically supported designation. JDS purchased the property in 2013, and intends to [build a tower](#) at the site. Stern said that JDS “look forward to integrating the rotunda into a



The rotunda inside Steinway & Sons retail space at 109 West 57th Street in Manhattan.  
Image Credit: LPC.

larger development.”

The [Historic Districts Council](#)’s Nadezhda Williams, speaking in support of designation, said that “seeing an elegant Steinway piano in such sumptuous surroundings is rather like seeing an animal in their natural habitat.” Christabel Gough, of the Society for the Architecture of the City, said the “iconic New York institution” served to “express the grandeur and importance of the concert piano” in the City’s culture.

Chair Robert B. Tierney closed the hearing after thanking JDS for their “cooperation and participation.” A date for a vote on designation has not yet been scheduled.

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LPC: Steinway & Sons Reception Room and Hallway, First Floor Interior, 109 West 57th Street, Manhattan (LP-2551) ([July 23, 2013](#)).

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## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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Designation Modification  
Upper West Side, Manhattan

### Recent Church Designation Modified to Exclude Convent Building

*No opposition to Pastor’s request to alter the footprint of the newly landmarked Catholic Church.* On July 23, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to modify the recently landmarked [Church of St. Paul the Apostle](#) site to exclude a convent, at [120 West 60th Street](#), from the designation at the request of the church leadership. The five-story convent building was built in 1949, and according to the [designation report](#), “does not contribute to the architectural or historical character of the church.” (Read *City-Land*’s past coverage [here](#).)

The site modification required a hearing, which did not garner any opposition to modification. [Manhattan Community Board 7](#) representative Mark Diller testified that modifying the designation “does no violence” to the landmark, while the



Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 8 Columbus Avenue, Manhattan. Image Credit: LPC.

Historic Districts Council’s Nadezhda Williams noted that the church had already sold its air rights, and that “landmarking the convent would not contribute towards the preservation of the church.”

Chair Robert B. Tierney read into the record a letter from Father Gilbert Martinez, Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle, which requested that Landmarks limit the designation to the footprint of the church, and said he looked forward to working together with Landmarks in the future.

Chair Tierney said the preservation of the convent was not the intention of the designation, but was included because it shared the tax lot the church was on. He characterized the amendment as “a minor adjustment,” and said Landmarks would “continue in partnership with the archdiocese.”

Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the revision of

the designation.

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LPC: Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 8 Columbus Avenue, Manhattan (LP-2260) ([July 23, 2013](#)).



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