

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

March 13, 2026

Hon. Zohran Mamdani
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Landmarks Preservation Commission
Chair and Commissioner Appointments**

Dear Mayor Mamdani:

As you consider who to appoint as Chair and Commissioners of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) asks you to choose professionals who are proactively committed to preserving our city's architectural and cultural history while recognizing that preservation and housing production can—and must—work together.

For decades, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) has been at the forefront of advocating for affordable housing. This advocacy has included both new construction and preservation of existing rent-regulated housing. Since 2015, MCB4 has had a written Affordable Housing Plan, and remains the only community board in the city with a comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan.¹ Given our history, MCB4 believes that preservation and dense development are complementary strategies that can both maintain communities while developing market-rate and affordable housing.

Landmarks and landmark preservation do not mean that communities are frozen in amber. Instead, crafting a thoughtful balance of preservation and new development can enable a community to grow its housing stock, both affordable and market-rate, while retaining its architectural and cultural history. It is possible to balance both preservation and new development as has been evidenced in many locations throughout the city. Within MCD4 there are vast areas of historic districts, yet we remain the largest housing producer in Manhattan².

On March 4, 2026, at its regularly scheduled MCB4 Full Board meeting, MCB4 voted, by a vote of 40 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 1 present but not eligible to request the new Administration to consider the following for new appointments to the LPC

¹ [MCB4 Affordable Housing Plan, revised June and July 2025.](#)

² NYC Department of City Planning Housing Database

Commissioner and Chair. MCB4 asks that the new Administration seeks individuals who understand and support New York City’s landmarks laws and assure their independence. There are a broad range of professionals throughout all boroughs of our city—architects, cultural historians, preservationists and community advocates—with a wealth of knowledge and practical experience.

MCB4 demonstrates the need to address:

1. the impact of LPC approvals on historic resources and housing supply
2. the compatibility of preservation and housing growth
3. the concerns regarding LPC’s capacity to respond to requests

Historical Context

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) should function as the public steward in historic preservation of the City’s history and culture. Under recent administrations, it is MCB4’s opinion that LPC has strayed from its role in two critical ways: it has resisted new landmark designations and failed to dutifully protect already-designated buildings and sites.

These lapses were documented by the eminent New York City preservation historian and advocate Jeffrey A. Kroessler in his 2018 publication, “Losing Its Way: The Landmarks Preservation Commission in Eclipse.” He wrote:

Increasingly in recent years, the Commission has backed away from proactively designated sites of historical, architectural, or cultural significance as city landmarks. At the same time, the Commission has shown greater deference to the owner of a property when deciding whether to designate, and to the wishes of the owners of designated properties in matters of regulation, notwithstanding that owner consent is nowhere in the landmarks law.

Further, as documented by Village Preservation,³ new designations fell to an all-time low under the Adams administration. As noted in the Mayor’s Management Report, in Fiscal Year 2025, LPC designated only four buildings citywide, compared to 339 designated buildings in Fiscal Year 2021 (p.433). See chart that follows. MCB4 urges you to appoint leaders who will proactively identify and designate significant sites, faithfully enforce existing protections, and restore public confidence in the Commission’s role as steward of New York City’s heritage.

Performance Indicators	Actual				
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
★ Individual, interior, and scenic landmarks, and historic districts designated	10	3	12	11	4
– Individual, interior, and scenic landmarks designated	8	1	10	10	4
– Historic districts designated	2	2	2	1	0
★ Total buildings designated	339	147	81	164	4
★ Critical Indicator	● Equity Indicator	“NA” Not Available	↑↓ Directional Target	* None	

³ The community-based historic preservation organization in Greenwich Village, formerly known as the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

Impact of Preservation on Housing

LPC actions could work to protect existing housing stock and to support new housing development. In fact, it is possible to balance both preservation and new development as has been evidenced in many locations throughout the city.

Last year, an LPC-approved combination and enlargement of two rowhouses in the Chelsea Historic District saw 18 apartments give way to a single home. Despite preservation activists' calls to protect those existing homes, LPC's approval of rowhouse expansions resulted in reducing housing stock by approving conversions from multiple dwellings to mega-mansions. This phenomenon has been lamented by some LPC Commissioners in public hearings, yet the majority of the Commission approved the plan. In better adhering to its preservation mission, the Commission could protect both historic buildings and existing market rate and affordable housing.

Another example from MCD4 is the former Seamen's House YMCA in West Chelsea.⁴ This is recognized as a significant site in the Chelsea neighborhood and is deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Through a balanced approach between preservation and development, the former Seamen's House YMCA is now slated for 124 permanently affordable housing units, plus 15 supportive housing units. This is proof of how housing and historic preservation can co-exist.

Compatibility of Preservation and Development

Harmony with preservation and new development occurred in the West Chelsea Historic District at the Terminal Warehouse.⁵ This full block landmarked building on Eleventh Avenue between West 27th and West 28th Streets was preserved and restored. Within the historic warehouse structure, LPC approved a major six-story addition that created more usable space.

In MCD4, the 46-story Hearst Tower was built atop the historic International Magazine Building, commissioned by William Randolph Hurst in 1926.⁶ The new development at 300 West 57th Street was designed by Norman Foster and completed in 2006.

An office to residential conversion in Hell's Kitchen illustrates the point as well. The McGraw-Hill Building at 330 West 42nd Street.⁷ is a 33-story built in 1931 and designed by Raymond Hood and J. Andre Fouilhoux. MCB4 engaged in extensive public discussions with the owner and development team in 2021 and 2023. The Commission approved a master plan for this Art Deco icon that facilitates its conversion from obsolete office space to hundreds of new residential units. This approval allows for the preservation of the building's distinctive blue-green terra cotta façade while adapting the interior for housing, proving that landmarking is not a barrier to residential growth.

Just outside of MCD4, on West 57th Street and 7th Avenue, is Carnegie Hall, the historic concert venue designed by William Burnet Tuthill and built by Andrew Carnegie. In

⁴ See Appendix A.

⁵ See Appendix B.

⁶ See Appendix C.

⁷ See Appendix D.

1991, the unused development rights above Carnegie Hall were used to build the adjacent Carnegie Hall Tower, designed by Cesar Pelli.⁸

Within the Madison Square North Historic District, a McKim Mead & White-designed bank building at 250 Fifth Avenue constructed a 24-story hotel-tower.⁹ The approved design resulted in a 90,000-square-foot hotel of 141 rooms to rise from the bank's two-story rear annex, a restoration of the existing building's facades, and a new canopy inspired by the original bank entrance. The new tower would be setback 15 feet from the bank with light-colored stone bands complementing its 100-year-old neighbor.

Funding Concerns

MCB4 would like to highlight concerns regarding LPC responsiveness, capacity, and the impact of certain approvals on historic resources and housing supply. There is a need for increased funding to LPC for important preservation work across the city.

MCB4 has directly experienced Commission responses in matters involving Requests for Consideration and Requests for Evaluation that have for too long been unanswered.

- **Former Seamen's House YMCA (2013 Request for Evaluation)**
MCB4 has not received a decision from LPC regarding its 2013 Request for Evaluation for the former Seamen's House YMCA.
- **Hell's Kitchen and Paddy's Market Historic Districts (July 2021)**
Despite the designation by the National Register of Historic Places, LPC did not designate the proposed Hell's Kitchen and Paddy's Market Historic Districts. LPC's response stated that the proposed district did not retain sufficient historic character and sense of place due to mixed integrity and lack of cohesiveness. (*See MCB4 CHKLU Letter to LPC re Paddy's Market and Hell's Kitchen Historic Districts, July 2021*)
- **Midtown South Mixed-Use Rezoning (March 2025)**
During the Midtown South Mixed Use rezoning process, MCB4 requested evaluation of four sites. LPC did not issue a determination, citing lack of funding. ([*MCB4 CHKLU Letter to DCP re ULURP #N250186ZRM Midtown South Mixed-Use Plan, March 2025*](#))

Conclusion

MCB4 is eager to work with the new Administration to engage in historic preservation as an opportunity for housing and balancing new development, rather than a hindrance. MCB4 requests that the Administration recommit to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to its founding mission of protecting the city's architectural and cultural heritage by seeking LPC commissioners and new Commission Chair aligned with that long held mission under the NYC Charter. We respectfully ask that you appoint LPC Commissioners and a Chair who:

- Proactively pursue landmark designations;

⁸ See Appendix E.

⁹ See Appendix F.

- Faithfully enforce existing protections;
- Recommit the Commission to its public stewardship role under the New York City Charter;
- Recognize the compatibility of preservation and housing growth; and
- Evaluate LPC's current funding levels and operational capacity to ensure it can adequately fulfill its landmarking responsibilities.

We look forward to working with you across a wide range of issues to support our City and its residents.

Sincerely,



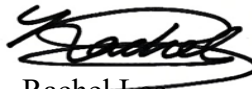
Leslie Boghosian-Murphy
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Gregory J Morris
Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Paul Devlin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen
Land Use Committee



Rachel Lee
Co Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen
Land Use Committee

CC: Hon. Julie Menin, Speaker of New York City Council
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Manhattan Borough President

Appendix A: Seamen's YMCA and Proposed Liberty Landing

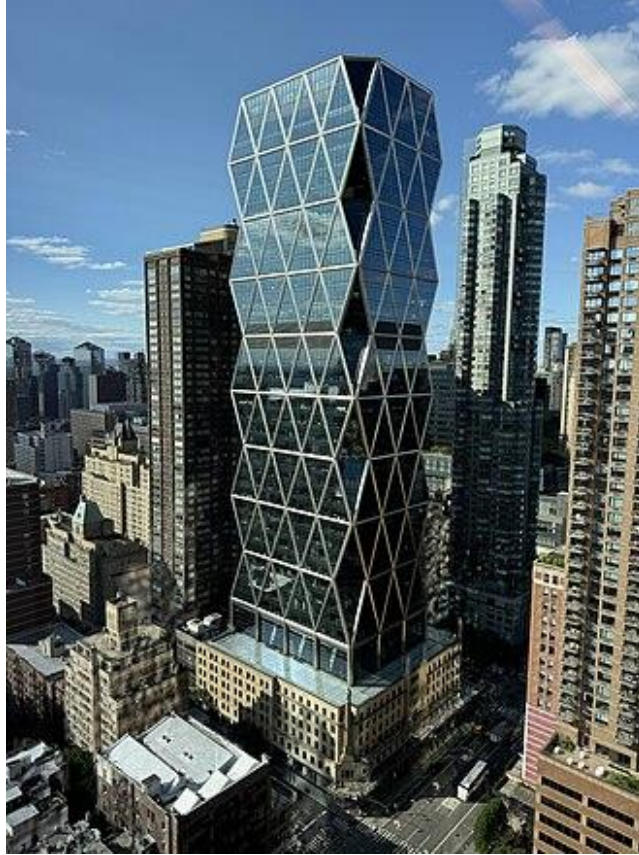


Appendix B: Terminal Warehouse



Appendix C: The Hearst Tower





Appendix D: McGraw-Hill Building





Appendix E: Carnegie Hall



Appendix F: 250 Fifth Avenue

