



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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COMMISSION APPROVES FIVE NEW LANDMARKS

*Designations Include **275 Madison Ave.**, an Art Deco Skyscraper in Midtown Manhattan, the **Hubbard House**, a Rare Dutch-American Farmhouse in Brooklyn's Gravesend Section, the **Elsworth House**, an Oysterman's Italianate Residence on Staten Island and the **New York Public Library's** Georgian Revival-Style **George Bruce Branch** and Italian Renaissance Palazzo-Style **125th Street Branch** in Harlem*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to designate two private residences, a skyscraper, and two New York Public Library branches as New York City landmarks, bringing to 1,222 the total number of individual buildings with landmark status in all five boroughs.

"This group of designations reflects the rich variety of architectural and historical layers that give New York City its distinctive texture," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "Each property is designed in a unique style and illustrates a telling moment in the City's development over the span of nearly two centuries."

In addition, the Commission held public hearings on the proposed designations of the Federal-style **Isaac T. Hopper House** at 110 2nd Ave. in the East Village; the former **St. George Melkite Catholic Church** (now a restaurant) at 103 Washington St. in lower Manhattan; the **John Peirce Residence**, an early 20th century Beaux Arts townhouse at 11 East 51st St. in Midtown; the **Lamartine Place Historic District** in Chelsea, consisting of a dozen houses built between 1846 and 1847 that were associated with the Underground Railroad and the Civil War Draft Riots of 1863 and the Woodstock and Hunt's Point branches of the **New York Public Library** in the Bronx. The Commission also voted to calendar the proposed **Fillmore Place Historic District** in Williamsburg for a public hearing that will be held at a later date. Below are descriptions of the buildings that received landmark status:

275 Madison Avenue Building

Located at the southeast corner of East 40th St. and completed in 1931, this 43-story skyscraper is one of the outstanding Art Deco office towers constructed around Grand Central Terminal during New York City's skyscraper boom of the 1920s and early 1930s.

The architect of 275 Madison Ave. was Kenneth Franzheim, who was renowned for his designs of theaters, department stores, auditoriums and office towers. It was developed by Houston Properties, a New York-based firm founded by Houston developer Jesse H. Jones, a Secretary of Commerce



More

and chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation under President Franklin D. Roosevelt who built nearly all of the skyscrapers in Houston in the first half of the 20th century.

The building is comprised of a three-story polished granite base with tall, rectangular openings. It features a black and silver color scheme and abstract ornament such as starbursts and zigzagging molding, and supports a setback tower faced in spare white brick and black terra-cotta tiles. Famed photographer Berenice Abbott photographed 275 Madison Ave. as part of her “Changing New York Series.”

“The exuberant base stands in sharp contrast to the austere, streamlined tower, which repeatedly steps back before narrowing at the top,” said Chairman Tierney. “This building is a product of a period that gave New York City some of its most iconic skyscrapers such as the Empire State and Chanin buildings.”

Some of the building’s original tenants included the American Bankers’ Association, New York Trust and the Johns-Manville Corporation, a producer of asbestos based-building products. It’s currently owned by RFR Realty, a real estate holding firm headed by developer Aby Rosen.

New York Public Library, George Bruce Branch, 518 W. 125th St. between Amsterdam and Broadway



The three-story Georgian Revival-style, brick and limestone library was completed in 1915 and designed by Carrere & Hastings, the prominent architecture firm responsible for the main branch of the New York Public Library, Grand Army Plaza at 59th Street in Manhattan, the Manhattan Bridge Arch and Colonnade and Staten Island Borough Hall, all of which are New York City landmarks.

The branch is named for George Bruce, a wealthy Scottish typographer who immigrated to New York in the late 18th century. After his death, his daughter,

Catherine, established a library in his memory that originally opened along 42nd Street in 1888. It later was sold, and the proceeds used to construct the current branch.

The entryway, set into a large arch on the east side of the building, is comprised of a set of wooden doors a large transom that’s flanked by historic copper lanterns and topped by an ocular window. The second-floor features three large windows with flared lintels, while the third has four smaller windows with center keystones.

New York Public Library, 125th St. Branch, 224 East 125th St.

Constructed in 1904, the three-story building was designed the Italian Renaissance palazzo style by McKim, Mead & White, another important architecture firm best known for several New York City landmarks, including the Bowery Savings Bank, Low Memorial Library, the Brooklyn Museum and the Villard Houses.

The library was one of 67 that were created between 1901 and 1929 through a \$5.2 million grant from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie to the City of New York to create a citywide library system. McKim, Mead & White designed 12 Carnegie libraries, and Carrere & Hastings designed 14 of them. Fifty-four of the Carnegie libraries remain in operation



today.

The building, clad in rusticated Indiana limestone, is dominated by large arched windows on the first and second floors. Three small, square windows pierce the façade on the third floor.

The designations of the 125th Street and George Bruce branches bring to 18 the number of New York Public Library buildings that have received landmark status since the Commission's founding in 1965.

“Both of these libraries are outstanding examples of civic architecture and their designs reflect the noble purpose they served,” said Chairman Tierney, who thanked the New York Public Library for its support of the designations of the libraries.

John H. and Elizabeth J. Elsworth House, 90 Bayview Avenue, Staten Island



The Elsworth House, an Italianate clapboard town house with a prominent front porch, was constructed in the Prince's Bay section of the borough in 1880 at the height of the success of the oyster fishing industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was built by John H. Elsworth, an oyster planter from Bayonne, NJ, who also served as the sheriff and clerk of Richmond County and died in the house in 1897. The architect is unknown.

Oyster fishing was a booming business on Staten Island between 1880 and 1905, and replaced farming as its most important industry.

“This fine house was built during the golden age of oyster fishing on Staten Island,” said Chairman Tierney. “It's a significant reminder that period in Staten Island's history.

The three-bay structure features pediments and brackets that were inspired by Italian Renaissance buildings. The structure is located on a large, sloping lot and is set back from the street, an unusual setting for a town house, which tended to be built in more settled areas.

Hubbard House, 2138 McDonald Avenue, Gravesend, Brooklyn

Built around 1830-1835, the 1 ½-story Hubbard House is one of the few Dutch houses in New York City remaining on its original site. It was built for Nelly Hubbard, the daughter of a farmer of Dutch descent who married a descendant of one of the first English patentees in Gravesend. Its construction is attributed Lawrence Ryder, a Gravesend carpenter-builder.

The small, simple residence still has its original curving eaves, gabled roof, window frames and wide-pine clapboard siding. It was built with traditional Dutch framing known as “H-bent construction.”



“The house retains an exceptional amount of original fabric,” said Chairman Tierney.

The house was leased to workers and artisans in the last half of the 19th century. It was purchased in 1904 by an Italian garment worker named Vincenzo Lucchelli, who added a two-story, hipped-roof wing to the

building in 1924. The residence remained in his family until the late 1990s, when it was acquired by its present owner, John Antonides.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 25,000 buildings, including 1,222 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 92 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the city's landmarks law, considered the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.