

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 28, 2012 / Calendar No. 8

N 130098 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated October 23, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Rainbow Room, located in the eastern section of the 65th Floor interior, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (Block 1265, Lot 1069 in part), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 16, 2012 (List No. 461/LP-2505), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the New York City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On October 16, 2012 the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Rainbow Room at 30 Rockefeller Plaza (Block 1265, Lot 1069 in part), as a city landmark. The landmark designation consists of the fixtures and interior components of this space, including but not limited to, the walls and ceiling surfaces, floor surfaces, rotating wood dance floor, stairs, stage, seating platforms, glass panel screens, chandeliers, wall sconces, and window frames.

Since opening on October 3, 1934, the Rainbow Room has been one of New York City's premier nightspots, an elegant supper club to dine, dance and enjoy incomparable views. Located at the east end of the 65th floor of the landmark 30 Rockefeller Plaza (the "Building"), this room is particularly notable because few interiors of this type survive from the early 20th century. The Rainbow Room was designed by the Associated Architects, the architects of Rockefeller Center. Wallace K. Harrison, a member of the firm Corbett Harrison & McMurray, acted as lead architect, working with interior decorator Elena Bachman Schmidt. This double-height space was conceived in the building's original design as a single volume, without columns. To create the most memorable vistas possible, the 24 window openings are some of the largest in the

building. Construction of the Rainbow Room began shortly after the repeal of Prohibition, in early 1934, and was completed by September of that year. The general style is Streamlined Modern, with calculated neo-classical flourishes.

Harrison's scheme was influenced by Joseph Urban, who designed many Manhattan nightclubs, as well as works by the German architect Erich Mendelsohn, which Harrison visited during a 1931 trip to Europe. Guests originally entered the Rainbow Room from the northwest corner, descending wide stairs that lead to a circular dance floor and domed ceiling. The almost square room had a capacity of more than 300 persons and many were seated at tables on tiered platforms located around the perimeter. To give the space additional "radiance," crystal chandeliers and wall sconces by Edward F. Caldwell & Co. were employed. The Rainbow Room has always generated considerable media attention and has been a fashionable setting for musical and dance performances, private parties, charity balls, scholarship drives and award ceremonies. In addition, during business hours it functioned as the Rockefeller Center Luncheon Club, which drew members from the surrounding office complex. Hugh Hardy, of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer, supervised a renovation in 1987 that preserved many historic features. A rare example of Streamlined Modern design, the Rainbow Room displays many of its original characteristics, making it one of New York City's most elegant and elevated restaurant interiors.

Situated in a C5-3 and C5-2.5 (max FAR 15.0 and 12.0, respectively) zoning district, the Building's zoning lot contains 93,940 square feet of lot area. Since the lot is located in the Special Midtown District, however, transferable development rights generated on the site are calculated as if the FAR was 16.0 and 13.0 respectively, therefore approximately 1,311,220 square feet of development rights are generated by the zoning lot.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a lot contiguous to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building or one which is across the street and opposite to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building,

or in the case of a corner lot, one which fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. The Building's zoning lot contains approximately 2,900,000 square feet of floor area. As provided for in Section 74-792 of the Zoning Resolution, there are no unused development rights available for transfer.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. In addition, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman
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