

HOTEL LEXINGTON, 511 Lexington Avenue (aka 509-515 Lexington Avenue; 134-142 East 48th Street), Manhattan. Built, 1928-29; architects, Schultze & Weaver

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1302, Lot 51

On July 19, 2016 the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Hotel Lexington and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 6). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Eight people spoke in support of designation including representatives of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Manhattan Community Boards 5 and 6, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Art Deco Society, the Municipal Art Society and the Historic Districts Council. Two people, the representatives of the owner and the Real Estate Board of New York, spoke in opposition to designation. In addition, the Commission received a letter from Council Member Daniel Garodnick and two e-mails from individuals in support of the designation.

Summary

The Hotel Lexington (1928-29), at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 48th Street, is one of the premiere hotels constructed along the noted “hotel alley” stretch of the avenue north of Grand Central Terminal. It was built as part of the redevelopment of this section of East Midtown that followed the opening of Grand Central Terminal and the Lexington Avenue subway line. Constructed after the passage of the 1916 zoning law, the tiered massing of the building represents the early evolution of skyscraper design.

The Hotel Lexington is designed in a neo-Romanesque style, complexly massed with ornamented setbacks, clad in limestone, brick, and terra cotta, and features a differentiated base, continuous piers, and a distinguished skyline profile as it rises 27 stories including the pyramidal roofed towers.

Leonard Schultze and S. Fullerton Weaver, considered the preeminent American luxury hotel firm of the 1920s and early 1930s were commissioned to design the hotel. Schultze & Weaver, following their designs in the 1920s boom years in Florida, became known for their expertise in modern skyscraper hotels cloaked in traditional historic ornamental styles. The firm designed a number of New York City’s most prestigious hotels, including the Sherry-Netherland (1926-27, with Buchman & Kahn), the Pierre (1929-30) and the Waldorf-Astoria (1929-31). The Lexington was one of the five major hotels, and today is one of only seven extant tall buildings by Schultze & Weaver in Manhattan.

According to the *New York Times*, the Lexington Hotel Corporation, a subsidiary of the American Hotels Corporation, planned this as the largest in the parent firm’s “large chain of first-class hotels” in the United States and Canada. Constructed at \$6.5 million dollars by the Turner



Construction Company, one of the world's leading building concerns, the hotel originally housed 801 rooms marketed as "modern luxury" at very moderate rates for out-of-town visitors.

The Hotel Lexington has attracted favorable notice from critics and historians since its completion. In 1929-30, the building was published in *Architect*, *American Architect*, *Architecture & Building*, and *Architectural Forum*, and "The Skyline" column in *The New Yorker* called it "a romantic addition" to Lexington Avenue. W. Parker Chase, in *New York: The Wonder City* (1932) called it a "sumptuous hostelry" and stated that the "location is ideal. Building gorgeous." More recently, the Lexington was one of the 14 hotels featured in the publication *Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age: The Architecture of Schultze & Weaver* (2005), in conjunction with the exhibition "In Pursuit of Pleasure: Schultze & Weaver and the American Hotel" at the Wolfsonian-Florida International University, which was based on its collection of the firm's plans, photographs, and documents.

The Hotel Lexington was the location of the famous Hawaiian Room (1937-66), featuring Polynesian cuisine and the best in Hawaiian music and dance. In 1984, the base of the building, previously altered, was reconstructed according to a modified version of the original design.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Hotel Lexington is a setback skyscraper with L-shaped footprint, at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 48th Street. Above a two- to three-story limestone base, the upper façade is executed in red brick decorated with random projecting headers; windows, beginning at the fifth story, have geometrically-patterned brickwork spandrels (traced in limestone at the fifth story). Light courts begin above the second story of the base on both the west and north elevations. The upper stories of the south and east facades are visible from East 47th and 48th Streets and are executed in brick with decoration similar to that on the two main facades. Portions of the east and south facades are unfenestrated, that on the south has two chimneys and is articulated by brick and terra-cotta decoration. The base was reconstructed in the 1980s by the architectural firm of William B. Tabler to approximate its original appearance. The historic recessed entrance on Lexington Avenue has been enclosed and converted into retail space; the decorative elements and sculptural details within the space are extant but are not covered by this designation since this is now an interior. Subsequent repairs have been made to the brick walls, some terra-cotta elements on the upper floors have been replaced with tan brick. Site features include siamese hydrants and raised vents.

Lexington Avenue façade:

Historic: Base: round-arched central entrance framed by angled piers topped by eagles with shields, windows with engaged columns and blind tympana, sculptural features including rosettes, griffins, two seated human figures and four standing figures representing the seasons; arcaded windows at third story framed by columns with bases in the form of winged lions and capitals with human faces, carved foliate molding and paneled frieze with eagle; flagpole bases with eagle design; two-story wings to the north and south with angled piers with Corinthian capitals supporting engaged columns topped by winged lions, blind tympana and arcaded frieze with rosettes and griffins (the features on the wings may be original based on a comparison of the placement of the piers in early photographs and the commercial cladding in the pre-restoration photographs). Upper stories: brick with random projecting headers; geometrically patterned spandrels; terra-cotta detailing at windows and parapets at setbacks and adjoining walls; round-arched fenestration at the 21st story with terra-cotta spandrels and lintels topped by avian finials; tower with round-arched openings capped by pyramidal roof with stone lantern; stone turrets with pyramidal roofs; mansard roof on south wing; chimney on south
Alterations: Base: first story painted; glass-and-metal storefronts at north and south; metal marquees at center and south; black marble piers, metal-and-glass storefront and glass panel in arch above marquee at center entrance; windows flanking central entrance enlarged; historic door openings (per

elevation drawings) converted into windows; parapets with coping added to wings, possibly historic eagle mounted at north corner; lights; signage; metal box awnings incorporating illuminated signage in north wing; vertical sign; replacement of stone work with stone or textured stucco as part of the reconstruction; fenestration pattern at second story of wings restored with slight height variation at center window on south; windows replaced; bird deterrent wires. Upper stories: portions of brick repointed or replaced and masonry patched; some terra-cotta replaced with painted brick; sides of tower and turrets resurfaced; windows and roofs replaced, arched transoms at 21st story infilled

East 48th Street façade:

Historic: Base: angled piers with Corinthian capitals supporting engaged columns topped by winged lions (some are replacements), blind tympana, and arcaded frieze with rosettes and griffins; easternmost bay is brick with round-arched entrance with blind tympana in a keyed, stone enframement and double-arched window with keyed, stone surround with colonnette. Upper stories: brick with random projecting headers; geometrically patterned spandrels; terra-cotta detailing at windows and parapets at setbacks and adjoining walls; windows in eastern light court with stone surrounds at third story and thick stone sills at fourth story; round-arched fenestration at 21st story with terra-cotta spandrels and lintels topped by avian finials; towers with round-arched openings capped by pyramidal roofs, the western one with stone lantern; stone turrets with pyramidal roofs; bays of light courts with mansard roofs; chimney on east

Alterations: Base: first story painted; glass-and-metal storefronts; one storefront infilled at first story; metal box awnings incorporating illuminated signage; some windows at first story partially infilled with vents; entrance enlarged to three bays and opened, steps to recessed entrance, angled piers with gilt capitals at first story, angled piers and columns with winged lions at second story; doors replaced; marquee with name in standing letters; metal fence at third story above entrance; parapet with coping atop west wing; ramp; metal box awnings above doors to right and left of center entrance; window with raised sill east of entrance; doors replaced, through-wall air conditioner, lights and conduits in easternmost bay; signage; lights; remote utility meters; camera; conduits; condensers in light courts on east and above entrance; bird deterrent wires. Upper stories: portions of brick repointed or replaced and masonry patched; arched transoms at 21st story infilled; some stone and terra-cotta features painted; some terra cotta replaced with painted brick

SITE HISTORY

Evolution of East Midtown¹

Pre-Grand Central Era

In 1831, the recently-established New York & Harlem Railroad signed an agreement with New York State permitting the operation of steam locomotives on Fourth (now Park) Avenue, from 23rd Street to the Harlem River. Five years later, in 1836, several important street openings occurred in East Midtown. These included 42nd Street, Lexington Avenue and Madison Avenue. Initially, trains ran at grade, sharing Fourth Avenue with pedestrians and vehicles. In 1856, locomotives were banned below 42nd Street – the current site of a maintenance barn and fuel lot. Though rail passengers continued south by horse car, this decision set the stage for East Midtown to become an important transit hub.

Cornelius Vanderbilt acquired control of the New York & Harlem, Hudson River, and the New York Central Railroads in 1863-67. Under his direction, a single terminal for the three railroads was planned and built, known as Grand Central Depot (1868-71, demolished). It was a large structure, consisting of an L-shaped head-house inspired by the Louvre in Paris, with entrances on 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, as well as a 652-foot-long train shed. The area immediately north,

mainly between 45th and 49th Streets, served as a train yard. Traversed by pedestrian and vehicular bridges, this busy facility occupied an irregularly-shaped site that extended from Lexington to Madison Avenue.

The earliest surviving buildings in midtown are residences in Murray Hill, directly south of 42nd Street. An 1847 covenant stipulated that all houses be built with brick and stone and many handsome examples survive, particularly on the blocks east of Park Avenue. Following the end of the Civil War, residential development continued up Fifth Avenue, transforming the area between St. Patrick's Cathedral (1853-88) and Central Park (began 1857, both are New York City Landmarks). Though most of the large mansions – many owned by members of the Vanderbilt family – have been lost, impressive residences survive on the side streets, between Park and Fifth Avenues. New York City Landmarks in the East 50s include: the Villard Houses (1882-85), William & Ada Moore House (1898-1900), Morton & Nellie Plant House (1903-05), and the Fisk-Harkness House (1871/1906).

Terminal City

In 1902, 15 railroad passengers were killed in a rear-end collision in the Park Avenue Tunnel, near 56th Street. In response to this tragic accident, William J. Wilgus, chief engineer of the New York Central Railroad, proposed that not only should steam locomotives be eliminated from Manhattan but that the terminal be expanded and completely rebuilt. The city agreed and Grand Central Terminal (a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark) was completed in February 1913.

Wilgus envisioned the terminal as part of a city-within-the city, knitted together by more than two dozen buildings constructed above the newly-submerged rail tracks. Faced with tan brick and limestone, these handsome neo-classical style Terminal City buildings formed an understated backdrop to the monumental Beaux-Arts style terminal. A key example is the New York Central Building, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark. Erected by the railroad in 1927-29, it stands directly above the tracks and incorporates monumental archways that direct automobile traffic towards the Park Avenue Viaduct (1917-19, a New York City Landmark).

The new terminal and subway attracted considerable commercial development to East Midtown, especially near 42nd Street, the original route of the IRT subway. Most of these buildings date to the 1910s and 1920s. In contrast to the neo-classical, City Beautiful, aesthetics that shaped Terminal City, these distinctive skyscrapers frequently incorporate unusual terra-cotta ornamentation inspired by medieval (and later, Art Deco) sources. Memorable examples include: the Bowery Savings Bank Building (1921-23, 1931-33) and the Chanin Building (1927-29), both New York City Landmarks.

In 1918, subway service was extended up Lexington Avenue, north of 42nd Street. Though Terminal City was planned with several hotels, such as the Biltmore and Commodore (both have been re-clad), additional rooms were needed. A substantial number of new hotels would rise on Lexington Avenue between 47th and 50th Streets, near the Grand Central Palace which brought thousands of travelers to the area for trade fairs and events such as the Westminster Kennel Club Show. Among the hotels that catered to this business were the Lexington and later the Shelton.

Post World War II

Following the end of the Second World War, the New York Central Railroad struggled with debt and entered a significant period of decline. In response, it began to terminate lot leases and sell off real estate properties. The impact of the situation was most powerfully felt on Park Avenue. Apartment buildings and hotels were replaced with new glass-curtain-wall office buildings, with such pioneering mid-20th century Modern works as Lever House (1949-52, a New York City Landmark) and the Seagram Building (1954-56, a New York City Landmark and Interior Landmark). The

success of these and other projects helped make Park Avenue (and East Midtown) one of Manhattan's most prestigious corporate addresses.

Lexington Avenue

In 1832 the New York State Legislature created Lexington Avenue and in 1836, along with Madison Avenue, which paralleled it to the west, it was opened to 42nd Street. Two years later the Legislature authorized the extension of Lexington Avenue north to 66th Street; however, that section was not opened until 1851.² By 1859 several institutions had established themselves in the blocks between Lexington Avenue and the railroad tracks including the Lexington Avenue Methodist Church (later Swedish Methodist-Episcopal Church) at Lexington Avenue and 52nd Street (1846, demolished), the Orphan's Home & Asylum of the Protestant Episcopal Church at 49th Street (c. 1859, later enlarged, demolished), and the Lexington Avenue Presbyterian Church, Lexington Avenue and 46th Street (c. 1859, demolished). On the east side of the avenue, the Nursery and Child's Hospital was established on 51st Street (c. 1855, demolished). However, Lexington Avenue itself between 42nd and 52nd Streets was largely undeveloped, with most residential buildings and small businesses established to the east on Third and Second Avenues.³ By the end of the 19th century, the area east of the railroad north of 42nd Street was lined with railroad facilities, hotels, warehouses, factories, large institutions and modest dwellings. Larger industrial and institutional structures continued to be located in the blocks immediately adjacent to the railroad including the Grand Central Hotel, New York Central and Harlem River Railroad freight depot and two engine houses, American Express, the New York State Women's Hospital, F. & M. Schaefer Brewing Co., and Steinway and Sons the piano manufacturers. The block fronts along both sides of Lexington Avenue and the adjacent side streets had by then been developed with brick and brownstone-fronted houses and tenements.⁴

Development of Hotels in New York City⁵

Hotels played an important role in the life of the city through the 19th and 20th centuries. For many years the Astor House, built in 1836 by Isaiah Rogers, located on Broadway between Barclay and Vesey Streets was the city's most renowned hotel. By 1859, the Fifth Avenue Hotel, called "the first modern New York Hotel," opened on Madison Square, offering its patrons amenities such as New York's first passenger elevator and luxuriously decorated interiors. During the course of the 19th century, hotels became increasingly larger and more luxurious, culminating in architect Henry J. Hardenbergh's Waldorf Hotel and Astoria Hotel. The Waldorf and Astoria complex, however, was not the only grand hotel built in the late 19th century. Fostered by economic prosperity, the large luxury hotels of this period became the venue for public life, supplying halls for promenading, dining rooms in which to be seen, and private rooms to entertain and be entertained.

By the early 20th century, the tendency was observed to "include within the walls of the building all the possible comforts of modern life, facilities which formerly could be found only beyond the hotel walls. Telephones, Turkish baths, private nurses, physicians..." in addition to laundry, maids, valets, barbers, hairdressers, and shoe-shine boys. A large staff was required to supply such services, which in turn necessitated a building that was large enough to make the whole enterprise financially sound.

The exterior design of the Waldorf and Astoria Hotels included warm-colored brick, elaborate ornament, and a strong roofline and it provided an influential stylistic exemplar for the many hotels that followed. In 1905, the architectural critic A. C. David proclaimed that the large, new American hotels were "in a different class architecturally from any similar buildings which have preceded them." These tall buildings were constructed with steel-frames, like skyscrapers, but were created "in such a manner that it would be distinguished from the office-building and suggest some

relation to domestic life.” David praised the use of warm materials, especially brick, and admired the strong roof lines.

In the second decade of the 20th century, new hotel construction centered on the city’s two rail hubs Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central Terminal. Around Terminal City Warren & Wetmore built a succession of relatively small hotels designed to give guests a sense of domesticity including the Biltmore (1913, re-clad) and the Hotels Chatham and Ambassador (1917 and 1921 respectively, both demolished) all of them offering guests multi-room suites. Following the war, as New York City became a commercial as well as tourist center attracting larger number of visitors, developers took advantage of the new zoning ordinance to create what became known as skyscraper hotels. By 1924 two of the largest hotels were being constructed in the Terminal City/Lexington Avenue area: the 22-story, 1,100-room Roosevelt Hotel (G. B. Post) to the west of Grand Central Terminal, the first hotel designed with integrated retail space, and the 31-story plus penthouse, 1,200-room Shelton Club Hotel the first one built on the east side of Lexington Avenue. In the Shelton “one could see the new zoning laws skillfully translated into a complexly massed, powerfully modeled composition that combined bold scale with a fine sense of detail so that the building’s appeal was not only as a virtually lone icon on the east midtown skyline, but also as a subtle insertion into the architecture of the city’s streets.”⁶ The Shelton set the standard for the skyscraper hotels that lined Lexington Avenue such as the Beverly Hotel (1927, Emery Roth and Sylvan Bien) and Hotel Lexington as well as others of the type built elsewhere in the city.

Schultze & Weaver⁷

Chicago-born Leonard Schultze (1877-1951) was educated at City College of New York, the architectural school of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and under the supervision of E. L. Masqueray, a Beaux-Arts trained architect who established an atelier in New York City. Schultze began his career in the office of Warren & Wetmore in 1900 and was promoted to chief of design for Grand Central Terminal in 1903, a position he held until 1911 after which he was named “executive in charge of the design and construction of all buildings relating to the terminal.” In 1921 he formed a partnership with Spencer Fullerton Weaver (1879-1939) the founder and president of the Fullerton Weaver Realty Company. The Virginia-born Weaver was a 1902 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania where he trained as a civil engineer. He became a developer in New York City and constructed apartment houses on Park Avenue above the terminal including the Park Lane Apartment Hotel. Considered the preeminent American luxury hotel firm of the 1920s and early 1930s, the two men specialized in the design and construction of hotels in New York and across the country. Their New York hotels included the Park Lane (1922, demolished), Sherry-Netherland (1926) and Pierre (1929, attributed to Lloyd Morgan) (both in the Upper East Side Historic District) as well as the Hotel Lexington. They were also responsible for such major hotels as the Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida, the Atlanta, Miami and Los Angeles Biltmores, and the Sevilla Biltmore in Havana (1924, addition). Lloyd Morgan (1892-1970) joined Schultze & Weaver as a designer in 1926, becoming a partner in 1929. A graduate of Pratt Institute (1911), Morgan later studied at the University of Pennsylvania and M.I.T. as well as the École des Beaux-Arts. He is credited with designing some of Schultze & Weaver’s best known buildings including the Barbizon Plaza and the Waldorf-Astoria (both individually designated New York City Landmarks). Following Weaver’s death the firm was renamed Leonard Schultze and Associates, in addition to the hotels, Schultze’s projects included apartment buildings and complexes such as the Parkfairfax, Parkmerced, and Park La Brea developments in Virginia and California for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and Parkway Village and Fordham Hill developments in New York City, as well as office buildings, schools, hospital and churches.

Hotel Lexington

Hotel development along Lexington Avenue was spurred by the construction of Terminal City over the New York Central Rail Road tracks to the west and the extension of the IRT subway under Lexington Avenue north of 42nd Street in 1918. The Hotel Lexington is one of the premier hotels constructed along the stretch of Lexington Avenue north of Grand Central Terminal. In 1928, the *New York Times* remarked that along this stretch of Lexington Avenue land values since the construction of the Shelton Club Hotel (525 Lexington Avenue, 1922-23, Arthur Loomis Harmon) had increased 300% and that in the previous five years over \$100 million had been invested.⁸ The Lexington Hotel Corporation purchased the 100 x 75 foot lot at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and East 48th Street from the Tishman Realty and Construction Company, Inc. in 1928.⁹ A subsidiary of the American Hotels Corporation, the Lexington Hotel Corporation planned this as the largest in the parent firm's chain of 52 first-class hotels in the United States and Canada.

Known for their expertise in the modern skyscraper hotels cloaked in traditional historic ornamental styles, the firm of Schultze & Weaver was chosen to design the Hotel Lexington. The Lexington was one of the five major hotels, and currently is one of only seven extant tall buildings by Schultze & Weaver in Manhattan. Here Schultze & Weaver, blended elements of the Romanesque with its round arches, decorative sculptures of animals (some mythical) and humans, angled piers, and colonnettes. The hotel features a differentiated base, continuous piers, and a distinguished skyline profile. The complex massing of the hotel reflects not only the zoning requirements following passage of the 1916 law but the fiscal reality of national prohibition. The two-story base was designed from the beginning to accommodate retail space rather than a restaurant, meeting rooms and bar common in earlier hotels.¹⁰ Above the base Schultze & Weaver designed the upper stories to maximize the light and air provided to the hotel's 801 rooms using deep light courts to carve the bulk of the building into three towers with multiple setbacks trimmed in terra cotta and topped by a pair of pyramidal towers, the larger with its four turrets rising above the building's western end.

Located in the burgeoning commercial district of East Midtown, the design and layout of the Hotel Lexington "shows most clearly this emphasis on utility, for it came the closest to serving a transient population."¹¹ Although the management did welcome long term residents, the hotel offered only single rooms with bathrooms at very modest rates for those "who desire to plan their day with the least bother and their greatest comfort."¹²

The Hotel Lexington has attracted favorable notice since its completion. In 1929-30, the building was published in *Architect*, *American Architect*, *Architecture & Building*, and *Architectural Forum*. Described in the *New Yorker* as "a romantic addition" to Lexington Avenue and *New York: The Wonder City* as a "sumptuous hostelry" whose "Location is ideal. Building gorgeous...."¹³ Leonard Schultze, in his 1929 membership application to the American Institute of Architects, listed only 12 of his American designs, including the Lexington. More recently, the Lexington was one of the 14 hotels featured in the publication *Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age: The Architecture of Schultze & Weaver* (2005), in conjunction with the exhibition "In Pursuit of Pleasure: Schultze & Weaver and the American Hotel" at the Wolfsonian-Florida International University, which was based on its collection of the firm's plans, photographs, and documents.

Hotel Lexington: Later History

Built just before the stock market crash, the Lexington Hotel Corporation was put into receivership in 1932 and management of the hotel was transferred to a hotel chain managed by the National Hotel Management Company, the first in the line of changes of management over the years.¹⁴ From 1937 to 1966, the Hotel Lexington was the location of the famous Hawaiian Room, featuring Polynesian cuisine and the best in Hawaiian music and dance. Two years later it became the home of Chateau Madrid a night club which had been established as an outpost for devotees of flamenco.¹⁵ It briefly served as home of Playboy's Empire Club in the mid-1980s.¹⁶ In the mid-

1980s, the Lexington's base, which had undergone a variety of alterations over the years, was reconstructed to approximate the appearance of the original design. The Lexington is now a boutique hotel owned by Diamond Rock Hospitality Company and operated by Marriott International, Inc. under their Autograph brand. Once home to guests like Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn Monroe, and a venue for entertainers like Arthur Godfrey, more recent guests have included Bill Clinton, Patti LaBelle, Jennifer Lopez and Roger Federer.¹⁷

Report prepared by
Marianne S. Percival
Evolution of East Midtown
prepared by Matthew A. Postal
Research Department

NOTES

¹ This section is mostly based on designation reports prepared by members of the research staff at the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Also see Kurt C. Schlichting, *Grand Central Terminal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York: 1880: Architecture and Urbanism in the Gilded Age* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999); Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism* (New York: Rizzoli Books, 1983); and Robert A. M. Stern and others, *New York 1930: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Two World Wars* (New York: Rizzoli Books, 1987).

² I. N. Phelps Stokes, *Iconography of Manhattan Island* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1928), 6: 596.

³ David Dunlap, *From Abyssinian to Zion: A Guide to Manhattan's Houses of Worship* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 130, 241; *King's Handbook of New York City: An Outline History and Description of the American Metropolis* (Boston: Moses King, 1892; reprinted New York: Barnes & Noble, 2001), 394-5, 440; Matthew Perris, *Maps of the City of New York* (New York: Matthew Perris, 1859), v. 5, pl. 80, 83.

⁴ Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), *Grand Central Terminal Interior Designation Report (LP-1009)* (New York: City of New York, 1980) prepared by Nancy Goeschel, 2-3; George W. and Walter S. Bromley, *Atlas of the City of New York: Borough of Manhattan* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1899), v. 2, pl. 32, 35.

⁵ This section was adapted from LPC, *Hotel Martinique Designation Report (LP-1983)* (New York: City of New York, 1998), prepared by Virginia Kurshan and included the following sources: A. C. David, "Three New Hotels," *Architectural Record* 17 (March 1905), 167-188; William Hutchins, "New York Hotels I," *Architectural Record* 12 (October 1902), 459-471; Hutchins, "New York Hotels II," *Architectural Record* 12 (November 1902), 621-635; and *New York 1900*, 253-272.

⁶ This section based on *New York 1930*, 201-3, 208, 212. The quotation is found on p. 208.

⁷ This section based on LPC, *Waldorf-Astoria Hotel Designation Report (LP-1812)* (New York: City of New York, 1993) prepared by Anthony W. Robbins, 3-4; "L. Schultze Dead; Architect Was 73," *New York Times (NYT)*, April 26, 1951, 76; "Maj. Weaver Dead; Park Ave. Builder," *NYT*, January 2, 1939, 26; Leonard Schultze, membership files, The American Institute of Architects Archives, *The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects*: ahd 1039905 (accessed February 23, 2016).

⁸ "Lexington Avenue Changing Rapidly," *NYT*, May 6, 1928, 159.

⁹ "Lexington Av. Site Sold to Tishmans," *NYT*, May 8, 1928, 48.

¹⁰ The interior of the Hotel Lexington was "distinctive" in that "all large assembly rooms of non-productive character usually found in other hotels of this type [were] being eliminated." A dining room and grill room with dancing were provided for residents but most of the public area was reserved for retail shops until after the repeal of prohibition when one of the stores was converted into a bar and tap room. "\$6,500,000 Hotel Planned for Lexington

Avenue,” *Real Estate Record and Builders’ Guide*, June 2, 1928, 8; New York City, Department of Buildings, Alteration Permit, ALT 1423-1933.

¹¹ Keith D. Revell, “The Skyscraper and the City: Schultze & Weaver’s New York Hotels,” in Marianne Lamonica and Jonathan Mogul, eds. *Grand Hotels of the Jazz Age: The Architecture of Schultze & Weaver* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 76.

¹² Display ad, *NYT*, November 15, 1929, 17.

¹³ T-Square, “The Sky Line,” *New Yorker*, July 6, 1929, 61; W. Parker Chase, *New York: The Wonder City...in the Year 1932* (New York: Wonder City Publishing, 1931), 131.

¹⁴ “Hotel Lexington in Receiver’s Hands,” *NYT*, March 11, 1932, 20.

¹⁵ Vincent Canby, “Chateau Madrid Opens Its New Home,” *NYT*, April 20, 1968, 25.

¹⁶ Michael Gross, “Big Cities Kiss Playboy Bunnies Goodbye,” *NYT*, June 27, 1986.

¹⁷ “New York’s Radisson Lexington Hotel Rebranded as Independent Operator, The Lexington New York City,” PRWeb, July 23, 2013 (<http://www.prweb.com/releases/lexingtonnyc/09/prweb9929662>, accessed July 23, 2013); “Hotels in New York City-Midtown Manhattan Hotels/Lexington New York City,” (<http://www.lexingtonhotelnyc.com/?isprint=true>, accessed November 10, 2015)

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Hotel Lexington has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that the neo-Romanesque style Hotel Lexington is one of the premiere hotels constructed in the 1920s and 1930s as part of Lexington Avenue's "hotel alley"; that it reflects the redevelopment of Lexington Avenue following the construction of Grand Central Terminal and the completion of the Lexington Avenue subway; that its tiered massing represents the early evolution of skyscraper design following the passage of the 1916 zoning law; that its complex massing features a differentiated limestone base, large light courts, and upper stories with multiple setbacks trimmed in terra cotta and topped by pyramidal towers; that the base, reconstructed in the 1980s, is a modified version of its original appearance, retaining the rhythm of solids and voids and incorporating the original ornamental arched entrance with sculptural figures on Lexington Avenue; that the Hotel Lexington was designed by the preeminent hotel architects Schultze & Weaver, designers of the Pierre, Waldorf-Astoria and Sherry-Netherland hotels; and that the Hotel Lexington contributed to the culture of New York City as the home of the Hawaiian Room and the Chateau Madrid.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Hotel Lexington, 511 Lexington Avenue (aka 509-515 Lexington Avenue; 134-142 East 48th Street), Borough of Manhattan and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1302, Lot 51 as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen,
Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson,
Adi Shamir-Baron, Kim Vauss, Commissioners



Hotel Lexington
511 Lexington Avenue (aka 509-515 Lexington Avenue; 134-142 East 48th Street)
Block 1302, Lot 51
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Lexington Avenue base and detail
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



East 48th Street base and detail
Photo: Sarah Moses, 2016



Tower detail

Photo: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



Detail at setback
Photo: Marianne S. Percival, 2016



Graphic Source: MapFLUTO, Edition 16v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 11.22.2016