



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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February 8, 2012 / Calendar No. 9

N 120151 HKM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated December 30, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Hotel Wolcott, 4 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street (Block 832, Lot 49), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 20, 2011 (List No. 450/LP-2423), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

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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 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 December 20, 2011 the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Hotel Wolcott (the “Building”), located 4 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street (Block 832, Lot 49), as a city landmark.

Built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Beaux Arts style, the Hotel Wolcott is located close to many of Manhattan’s important entertainment, business and shopping destinations as well as a variety of public transportation services. Designed by the prominent architect John H. Duncan, the hotel served as a meeting place for many important political events, such as LaGuardia’s inaugural ball, and was the long-term residence of celebrities such as Isadora Duncan and Doris Duke. The hotel was typical of the midtown hotels of the period in the variety and quality of its accommodations, but stood out for its distinctive classical French Beaux Arts style consisting of over-scaled keystones, brackets and cartouches, rendered with the sure hand of a master architect. Faced in pink brick and limestone with a substantial copper-covered mansard roof, the building provides a solid base and graceful façade in this busy part of the City.

John H. Duncan is best known for his designs for the General Ulysses S. Grant National

Memorial as well as the Soldier's and Sailor's Memorial Arch in Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn. He is also responsible for numerous classically-styled and distinguished homes for wealthy New Yorkers, particularly in midtown and the Upper East Side. At the Hotel Wolcott, Duncan created a unique classical design, appropriate for the exuberance of the period, and one that gives a distinctive presence to this building which continues to fulfill the same functions for which it was designed, more than 100 years ago.

The landmark site is located in an M1-6 zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 10.0, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 95,150 square feet of floor area. The Hotel Wolcott contains approximately 90,633 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 4,517 square feet theoretically available for transfer.

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.

There are eight potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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

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.

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