



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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November 15, 2006 / Calendar No. 12

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated September 28, 2006, from the Executive Director of **the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Morse Building (later Nassau-Beekman Building)**, 138-142 Nassau Street, aka 10-14 Beekman Street (Block 100, Lot 26), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on September 19, 2006 (List No. 380/LP-2191), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 1.

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Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the 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.

The Morse Building is located in Lower Manhattan on a corner lot between Beekman and Spruce streets at 138-142 Nassau Street. The building was constructed in three phases between 1878 and 1880 with an addition in 1901-1902. The building was designed by [Benjamin Jr.] Sillman & [James M.] Farnsworth and the addition by [William P.] Bannister & [Richard M.] Schell.

The structure's six-story mid-section is, in part, the earliest surviving (as well as one of the very few surviving) tall "fireproof" New York office buildings of the period prior to the skyscraper. The building was a speculative commission by Sidney E. Morse and G. Livingston Morse, cousins who were sons of the founders of The New York Observer and nephews of Samuel Morse, the founder of the electric telegraph.

It is an early example of the use of brick and terra cotta with intricate polychrome brickwork. In 20 years, it was considered "small" compared to the tall 1890s steel skyscrapers and in 1901-1902 it was altered with a remodeled base, the upper two stories were reconstructed, and four

steel-framed stories clad in cream colored brick were added bringing it to 14 stories. This shift in color and style reflected the influence of the recently built Broadway Chambers Building (built in 1899-1900 by Cass Gilbert).

From 1919-1942, it was the headquarters of the United Cities Realty Corporation. In c. 1965, the 10<sup>th</sup> story balcony/cornice was removed, and the base of the structure was altered again. In 1980, it was converted from office to residential use.

The landmark site is located in a C6-4 zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio of 10, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 59,640 square feet. The Morse Building contains approximately 79,422 square feet of floor area. Since the landmark site is built at or above the allowable floor area ratio, there are no development rights which may be available for transfer pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution.

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.

There are no projected public improvements or plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

The subject landmark designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

**AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair**

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

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