



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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January 5, 2011 / Calendar No. 25

N 110150 HKM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated November 22, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Paul Rudolph Penthouse & Apartments, located at 23 Beekman Place (Block 1361, Lot 118), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 16, 2010 (List No. 435/ LP-2390).

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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.

The Paul Rudolph Penthouse & Apartments (23 Beekman Place) is located on the east side of Beekman Place, between East 50<sup>th</sup> and East 51<sup>st</sup> Streets, in Community District 6 on the east side of Midtown Manhattan. It was initially constructed around 1865 as a five-story row house. From 1922 to 1951 it was the residence of the popular actress Katharine Cornell and the prolific producer-director Guthrie McClintic. Architect Paul Rudolph began leasing space there in 1961 and made it his full-time residence in 1965. Eventually he would implement the redesign of 23 Beekman Place which is the subject of this designation. Rudolph (1918-1997) was one of the most celebrated and influential architects of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A “second-generation” modernist, he was a student of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer and early in his career made important contributions to architecture in Florida and to exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. From 1958 to 1965 he served as the head of the Department of Architecture at Yale University as his career reached its zenith. Rudolph also completed five other projects in New York City, including residences at 246 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street and 101 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Rudolph purchased the building in 1976 and in 1977, after a variance was granted by the Board of Standards & Appeals, received a building permit for the redesign. This redesign, which

included converting the building into five apartments, is noteworthy for several reasons, but mainly for the four-story penthouse added by Rudolph, which was a highly-conspicuous addition to the neighborhood.

Regarding the lower portion of the building, the ground story, partially redesigned in the late 1920s, is set below grade and has three rounded-arched openings. The large wooden door and a flat metal awning that juts out over the ground floor were added in 1929-30. The second story has nine-over-nine windows while the rest of the building below the penthouse has non-historic double hung windows.

The penthouse, which begins at the sixth floor and cantilevers out five feet over the sidewalk is constructed with exposed I-beams and floor-to-ceiling windows. The front façade of the penthouse (facing Beekman Place) has one panel and the other sides have multiple panels. Each of the floors of the penthouse terraces has a shallow terrace that stretches the length of the building and the penthouse is acknowledged to have five distinct outdoor spaces.

The landmark site is located in an R8B (max FAR 4.0) zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0 the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 8,000 square feet of floor area. The building contains approximately 9,296 square feet of floor area and is therefore overbuilt by approximately 1,296 square feet.

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. Since the building is overbuilt, there are no development rights eligible 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 upon application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

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.

**AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair**

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