



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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November 16, 2011 / Calendar No. 12

N 120081 HKM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated September 29, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Madison Belmont Building, First Floor Interior, 181 Madison Avenue (Block 863, Lot 60), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on September 20, 2011 (List No. 448/LP-2425), 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 September 20, 2011 the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the first floor interior of the Madison Belmont Building at 181 Madison Avenue (Block 863, Lot 60) , as a city landmark. The landmark designation consists of the interior main lobby space, including the fixtures and components of this space, such as the wall, ceiling and floor surfaces, entrance and vestibule doors, grilles, bronze friezes and ornament, lighting fixtures, elevator doors, mailbox, interior doors, clock, fire command box, radiators, and elevator sign.

The first floor interior lobby of the Madison Belmont Building, located between East 33<sup>rd</sup> and East 34<sup>th</sup> streets in Manhattan Community District 5, is a rare, intact and ornate Eclectic Revival style space designed as part of the original construction of the building 1924-1925. The room is furnished with a mixture of fine materials, including a variety of marbles and bronze and has a multi-colored, barrel-vaulted ceiling painted in classically-inspired designs. Reached via the main entrance and vestibule on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, it serves the Madison Belmont Building, an L-shaped structure running south to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and east to Madison Avenue, which was designed by the prominent architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore, with ironwork in the Art Deco style by

Edgar Brandt, French iron master. The building was constructed by the Merchants and Manufacturers Exchange of New York to house showrooms and offices for silk companies in the newly formed Silk District of mid-town Manhattan.

Although the exterior of the Madison Belmont Building has many elements that reflect newly emerging modern ideas in architecture, the interior lobby is more traditional and uses a variety of motifs inspired by ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt. The walls are faced with framed marble panels highlighted by bronze figures of gods and mythological creatures, suggestive of ancient Roman mural paintings found in Pompeii, while specific motifs such as lotus flowers and a variety of sphinx figures derive from ancient Egypt. The metalwork, including the wall figures and the various bronze doors, was created by Edgar Brandt's French workshop and shipped to New York for installation. The ceiling is slightly coved, with painted designs highlighted by low relief plaster details, including laurel leaves framing the rondelles. The central areas are enhanced by several large mythological figures, including the goddess Leda (known as a skilled weaver) riding a swan and holding various silk spinning implements. The design and materials the building's lobby immediately give visitors an impression of great luxury and refinement, a desirable effect for those originally shopping for fine silk goods. It continues to serve as an elegant and unique entrance for its current tenants.

Situated in a C5-2 district (max FAR 10.0 residential & 10.0 commercial), the Building's zoning lot contains approximately 233,484 square feet of floor area and 12,160 square feet of lot area. Since the lot contains more floor area than is permitted (121,600 square feet), there is no floor area 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. As provided for in Section 74-79.2 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.

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