



**NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION**

Robert B. Tierney  
Chairman

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2011  
No. 11-01**

**FORMER CONEY ISLAND RESTAURANT AND ACCOUNTING FIRM HEADQUARTERS IN  
MIDTOWN GIVEN LANDMARK STATUS**

*Childs Restaurant, Home of the Coney Island Museum, and the Haskins & Sells Building Now  
Protected*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today unanimously approved the designations of the former **Childs Restaurant** building on Coney Island, and the **Haskins & Sells Building** in Midtown as New York City landmarks, citing their architectural, historic and cultural significance.



Located at 1208 Surf Avenue at the intersection of West 12<sup>th</sup> Street in West Brighton, Childs Restaurant was completed in 1917 in West Brighton as part of a larger effort to transform Coney Island into a “wholesome” amusement area. It was the first restaurant on Coney Island built for the well-known chain, which opened in 1889 and served simple, reasonably priced food in a clean setting.

The building, designed by the one of the chain’s house architects, John C. Westervelt, incorporates elements of the Spanish and Mediterranean Revival styles, such as a red tile roof, round-arch openings and a white façade.

“The unusual design of the building recalls a resort typically found in Florida or the Caribbean,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “It helped set the tone for the millions of visitors who flocked to Coney Island each summer to escape the heat of the nearby city, and contributed to the amusement area’s aura of fantasy.”

Childs opened a second restaurant, also a New York City landmark, in 1923 along the Coney Island Boardwalk at 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The chain was responsible for introducing cafeteria service and had restaurants in 14 American cities and Canada by 1950. The Riese Brothers bought the company in 1966, and opened the 90<sup>th</sup> Childs Restaurant in Midtown in 1966.

Childs operated the Surf Avenue restaurant until 1943, when the building was leased to the Blue Bird Casino and restaurant. It was later used for David Rosen’s Wonderland Circus Sideshow, and since 2007 has housed Coney Island USA, operator of the Mermaid Parade and the Coney Island Museum. The building joins a group of other landmarked sites on Coney Island, including the Shore Theater, which was designated on Dec. 14, 2010, the Wonder Wheel, the Parachute Jump and the Cyclone.

**The Haskins & Sells Building**, located at 35 West 39<sup>th</sup> Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues, was completed in 1912 and designed in the Renaissance Revival style by Frederick C. Zobel, an architect who was known as a building engineering expert and specialized in commercial buildings.



The 12-story structure was completed a few years after the opening of Penn Station, and was constructed at a time when the area was changing from a residential neighborhood to a commercial hub. It was built adjacent to the Engineers' Club and Engineering Societies' buildings as a speculative venture to attract businesses related to the engineering field. But the building drew only a handful of companies in that profession, and brought in a mix of early tenants that included the Mumm Champagne and Importation Company, the State and National Association Opposed to Political Suffrage for Women and the Man Suffrage Association Opposed to Political Suffrage for Women. Three chapters of the League of Women Voters moved into the building by 1922.

The building's namesake, Haskins & Sells, bought the building in 1920 for its headquarters. The company, recognized as the first auditing firm to be founded by American accountants, was started in 1895 by Charles Waldo Haskins, the nephew of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Elijah Watt Sells, whose father was the U.S. Treasury Department Auditor under President Abraham Lincoln.

The building is comprised of an arcaded, terra-cotta base and an angled, blonde-brick tower that rises from the fourth story, which features a balustraded balcony. A yellow marble panel inscribed with the firm's name is set in a terra-cotta frieze above the first floor, and elaborate ornament such as wreaths and swags featuring marble details adorn much of the building.

"Remarkably, this graceful building has been virtually untouched since its construction nearly a century ago," said Chairman Tierney. "It's a lasting visual reminder of a time when this part of the City was in the midst of a major transition."

Haskins & Sells sold the building in 1925, but kept its headquarters there until 1930. The company was eventually absorbed into Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, one of the four largest accounting firms in the world. The building has been owned by a number of different corporations over the years, and its current tenants include architecture, law and accounting firms.

In other business, the Commission held a public hearing on a plan to landmark the former **Free Public Bath of the City of New York** building at 344 West 54<sup>th</sup> St., now a Parks Department recreation center. It also voted to hold public hearings on proposals to landmark **Hawthorne Court**, a residential complex at 215-37 to 215-43 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 42-22 to 42-38 216<sup>th</sup> Street in the Bayside section of Queens, and the **Citizens Savings Bank** building at 58 Bowery in Manhattan's Chinatown. Dates were not set for the hearings.

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The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the mayoral agency responsible for protecting and preserving New York City's architecturally, historically and culturally significant buildings and sites. Since its creation in 1965, LPC has granted landmark status to more than 27,000 buildings, including 1,276 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks, 101 historic districts and 16 historic district extensions in all five boroughs. Under the City's landmarks law, considered among the most powerful in the nation, the Commission must be comprised of at least three architects, a historian, a realtor, a planner or landscape architect, as well as a representative of each borough.

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