



## The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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### **COMMISSION APPROVES DESIGNATIONS OF NEW YORK CITY'S 93<sup>rd</sup> HISTORIC DISTRICT, AS WELL AS ONE CHASE MANHATTAN PLAZA AND CONSOLIDATED EDISON'S HEADQUARTERS**

*Alice and Agate Courts Historic District in Bedford Stuyvesant Is the Ninth Historic District Designated Outside Manhattan Since 2002, the Highest Number by Any Administration Since LPC's Founding in 1965*

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission today voted unanimously to approve historic district status for **Alice and Agate Courts** in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. The Commission also approved landmark status for two of the Manhattan skyline's most distinctive skyscrapers, **One Chase Manhattan Plaza** in the Financial District and the **Consolidated Edison Building** near Union Square.

The Alice and Agate Courts Historic District, an enclave of 36 late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Queen Anne-style row houses, is the 9<sup>th</sup> historic district designated outside of Manhattan since 2002, the highest number of any mayoral administration since the Commission's founding in 1965. The other districts that have been approved are: **Stapleton Heights** on Staten Island, **Sunnyside Gardens** and **Douglaston Hill** in Queens, **Crown Heights North**, **Eberhard Faber Pencil Company**, **DUMBO** and **Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park** in Brooklyn and **Fieldston** in the Bronx.

Constructed in stages between 1910 and 1929, the classically inspired Consolidated Edison Building was designed by the prominent architectural firms of Henry J. Hardenbergh and Warren & Wetmore. One Chase Manhattan Plaza, built between 1957 and 1964, and was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the leading firm in the United States working in the International Style in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

"These three designations reflect the remarkable transition that took place in New York City architecture between the historic revival styles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the bold aesthetic strategies of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century modernism," said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. "The designation of Alice and Agate Courts is also a milestone for this Commission, as it's the ninth historic district we've approved outside of Manhattan, the most of any mayoral administration, and still more are on the way."

In addition to the designations, the Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the **Herman A. Schleicher Mansion**, a 2 1/2 – story Italianate style mansion completed in 1857 in the College Point section of Queens, an area that was once home to several estates with grand residences. It also voted to calendar a proposal to designate the **Ocean on the Park Historic District**, a stretch of 12 early 20<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance Revival limestone row houses located on Ocean Avenue between Lincoln Road and Parkside Avenue in the Prospect Lefferts Gardens section of Brooklyn.

Brief descriptions of each designation follow below:

### **Alice and Agate Courts Historic District**

The historic district comprises 36 Queen Anne-style row houses along on two cul-de-sac streets on the north side of Atlantic Avenue between Kingston and Albany Avenues, near the southern edge of Bedford Stuyvesant in north central Brooklyn.



Constructed between 1888 and 1889, the row houses were developed as rental properties by Florian Grosjean, a Swiss-born industrialist whose New York-based company manufactured metal utensils, pots, pans, sinks and other wares. The cul-de-sac streets were named for Grosjean's daughter, Alice Marie and for "agate ware," the enamel-coated iron products that were made by his company, Lalance & Grosjean. The firm operated a plant in Woodhaven, Queens for about 100 years and disbanded in 1955.

The red brick, brownstone, bluestone and terra cotta buildings were designed by architect Walter M. Coots, who was responsible for a number other row houses and apartment buildings in Brooklyn. The buildings feature conical-roofed corner turrets, projecting bays, carved stonework, elaborate ironwork and stained glass windows.

"These charming, eclectic row houses form a quiet residential oasis in the midst of a bustling commercial district," said Chairman Tierney, who added that the designation includes a tall, brick wall at the end of Agate Court. "The buildings aren't identical, but work together as a cohesive group."

The row houses' earliest tenants were mostly white collar workers such as publishers, salesmen, builders, stenographers, clerks and bookkeepers. Each residence had between 10 and 11 rooms, and rented for up to \$540 a year. Grosjean's heirs sold the properties in 1904, and were subdivided and resold several times in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the row houses currently are occupied by their owners.

### **Consolidated Edison Building**, 4 Irving Place, between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> streets, Manhattan



Constructed originally for the Consolidated Gas Company, the predecessor to utility giant Consolidated Edison, Inc., the imposing, classically inspired skyscraper near Union Square was built in stages between 1910 and 1929. The earliest 18-story sections of the building, which are located on East 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the east side of Irving Place, were completed in 1914 and among the last major works of Henry J. Hardenbergh, the eminent architect responsible for several other New York City landmarks, including the Dakota Apartments, Plaza Hotel and Art Students League.

Two extensions to Hardenbergh's 18-story sections were built between 1926 and 1929, incorporating a signature 26-story limestone-clad, square tower at the corner of Irving Place and East 14<sup>th</sup> Street. These additions were designed by Warren & Wetmore, the renowned architecture firm whose other works include Grand Central Terminal, the New York Yacht Club and the Aeolian Building, all New York City landmarks.

“The Con Ed Building has a commanding presence in the Union Square neighborhood, and also has one of the great towers that define the Manhattan skyline,” said Chairman Tierney.

The facades of the earlier sections incorporate elements Renaissance and Classical Revival styles are topped an ornate cornice and have giant segmental arches, rusticated limestone piers, and double-story porticos at the base. The structures originally featured an elaborate system of nighttime illumination.

Warren and Wetmore’s tower has a three-story colonnaded base and a setback tower featuring illuminated clocks, a bell chamber modeled on the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, an enormous bell-capped roof and a huge bronze and glass lantern. Called the “Tower of Light,” it was meant to be a symbol of the company’s role as one of the nation’s largest producers of power and light and a memorial to the company’s employees who died in World War I.



The tower continues to be illuminated at night, and serves as the headquarters for Consolidated Edison, Inc., which has played an integral role in the development of New York City.

### **One Chase Manhattan Plaza**



Located between Nassau and William streets to the west and east, and Liberty and Cedar streets to the north and south, One Chase Manhattan Plaza is one of the most important office towers built in Lower Manhattan since World War II. It consists of three main components: a 60-story tower, a 2 ½- acre plaza and a six-story base, five floors of which are beneath grade, all of which reflect the principles of 20<sup>th</sup>-century European modernism, often called the International Style.

David Rockefeller, former Chairman and CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank, and grandson of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller, helped spearhead the construction of the complex in 1957, and led the revival of a historic neighborhood where few new buildings had been constructed since the Great

Depression.

The renowned architect Gordon Bunshaft led the team at Skidmore Owings & Merrill that designed the complex. The firm was also responsible for such iconic International Style buildings as Lever House, the Fifth Avenue Branch of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, the Pepsi-Cola Building and Manhattan House. All four are New York City landmarks.

“Few buildings have had as significant an impact on the character of Lower Manhattan as One Chase Manhattan Plaza,” said Chairman Tierney. “It laid the groundwork for a downtown renaissance, and served as a catalyst for the construction of other corporate towers immediately to the west, including the Marine Midland Bank, World Trade Center and World Financial Center Complex.”

When they were completed in 1964, the plaza and shimmering tower, with 8,800 plate glass windows,



stood in sharp contrast to the masonry buildings along the Financial District's narrow, twisting streets. The complex's unusual arrangement – with six floors located beneath the plaza, one of which is above grade – allowed for the installation of a sunken rock garden designed by Isamu Noguchi, the famed Japanese-American sculptor.

The complex, now owned by JP Morgan Chase & Co., drew widespread attention from the media when construction ended, including former New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, who wrote, “These are ambitious structures of character and quality, surrounded by the most expensive urban luxury money can buy, space. In a remarkable duality of purpose, reconcilable only in the commercial age, they aspire to be trademark and work of art.”

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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 25,000 buildings, including 1,224 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, 10 scenic landmarks and 93 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the city's landmarks law, considered 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.