

July 22, 2014

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING AN ADVISORY REPORT FOR 110 EAST  
42<sup>ND</sup> STREET, THE BOWERY SAVINGS BANK, AN INDIVIDUAL AND INTERIOR LANDMARK**

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy's Public Policy Committee has reviewed the proposal for a new building at Vanderbilt Avenue and East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street that will be a receiving site for air rights from 110 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and considered the relationship between the new building and its neighbor, Grand Central Terminal.

We thank the applicants for their thorough presentation and explanation of that relationship; however, our Committee found that it was not harmonious enough. The height and scale of the new tower are, in a practical sense, separated from the streetscape, so we concentrated on the base. We appreciate the concern the architects have taken in using materials such as the Guastavino-inspired tiles, and in pulling the building back to open up some views of Grand Central. Yet overall, we found that the busy base detracts from the stately landmark. We suggest that a simpler design would be a better neighbor, and that pulling the building back even further from the lot line to show Grand Central's full corner would enhance the harmony.

This quintessential New York intersection might be better served by a building that is unique to New York, not by a glass tower similar to those that can be found around the world. We do not advocate for facadism, but wonder what might have been if the developers had considered ways to reuse landmark-quality buildings instead of demolishing them. 51 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street is eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places; its brick and limestone façade might have made a great entrance to the new public waiting room and an inspiration for the entire new building. Warren and Wetmore designed it as part of Terminal City, in order to complement Grand Central. It's hard to do better than that in establishing a harmonious relationship.

We recognize that the LPC's decision to look at the relationship of the new building to Grand Central is unusual, and that this opinion is advisory. We appreciate this attention paid to how the first new building in the proposed Midtown East rezoning area will relate to its most significant landmark. The prior Commission surveyed the larger rezoning area including this block of Vanderbilt Avenue and identified 32 buildings as "potentially eligible" for landmarking. We hope that this Commission will be inclined to promptly consider and act on those designations.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.