

**THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY**

March 20, 2018

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE N.Y.C. LANDMARKS  
PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR 140 BROADWAY,  
THE MARINE MIDLAND BUILDING, AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK**

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy has reviewed the proposed alterations to Skidmore Owings & Merrill's public plaza at 140 Broadway.

The building and its public plaza are among the best known and most admired examples of mid-twentieth century American design. 140 Broadway should be accorded the same high level of aesthetic oversight as Lever House and the Seagram Building and their respective plazas. Ada Louise Huxtable had this to say:

"When it is good, New York is very, very good...For a demonstration of New York at its physical best, go to Broadway between Cedar and Liberty Streets and face east. You will be standing in front of the new building at 140 Broadway, one of the handsomest in the city and you will not be able to miss the 28-foot high vermillion steel cube by Isamu Noguchi. It is a stunning success in terms of urban design."

Prior to designation, the plaza at 140 Broadway underwent some unfortunate alterations, such as the large rectangular planters on Cedar Street and the Helmsley memorial, which upset the very careful balance of tower, plaza, and cube. We are pleased that the project team has responded to concerns that their earlier design raised, and that instead they have presented a proposal with more modulated interventions.

The new planters along Cedar Street more closely resemble historic planters. The light fixtures are modest individually but in ensemble, they represent the most significant departure from the historic design. We understand the need for safety but any alteration of this magnitude should be executed in the least intrusive way. The section of the plaza along Broadway closest to the street, where planters and benches are proposed, is not in the Commission's purview, but if it was, we would recommend a very light touch, that maintains the historic, porous nature of the plaza.

The owners have an opportunity to restore and revitalize one of the most important Mid-century modern plazas, so that it once illustrates New York when it is very, very good. We hope that with the Commission's guidance, they get it right.

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