

February 20, 2018

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE HOTEL SEVILLE, NOW THE JAMES NEW YORK AT 22 EAST 29TH STREET (AKA 90-94 MADISON AVENUE) AS AN INDIVIDUAL LANDMARK

Good day, Chair Srinivasan and Commissioners. I am Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is pleased to support designation of the former Hotel Seville, which is listed as an individual landmark on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Architect Harry Allen Jacobs designed the main section of hotel in 1901 in a robust Beaux-Arts style. This 12-story building anchors the corner of Madison Avenue and 29th Street. A muscular façade features vibrant alternating horizontal bands of brick and limestone at the three-story base, and alternating vertical bays of brick and white terra cotta on the upper stories, crowned with a projecting metal cornice. At the corner, an entrance is at the chamfered base; on the upper floors is a curved copper bay of windows.

The Seville recalls the era when this section of Madison Avenue was changing from an affluent residential district to an area of more moderate hotels for residents and visitors. This trend was associated with the northward construction of the subway and compounded as New York needed more and more hotels to accommodate tourists and business travelers, especially near Times Square and the Garment District.

Like many other hotels in this neighborhood, the Seville had a downturn in the later 20th century, but has undergone a remarkable renaissance, and is now known as the James. As development pressures have increased in the Madison Square North section, and many other buildings have been lost, we thank the Commission for recognizing the former Seville and urge a quick designation vote.

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