

THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY

June 27, 2016

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Re: The Waldorf Astoria ~~Public~~ Rooms

Dear Chair Srinivasan:

The Landmarks Conservancy urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to calendar and designate the great public interior spaces of the legendary Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Recent announcements that the hotel will be “guttled” and transformed largely to condominium use raises the scenario that the lobby, the two main entries and other great public spaces such as Peacock Alley, the Grand Ballroom etc. will be lost or altered beyond recognition.

These spaces are historically significant. They possess not only aesthetic significance as the very finest surviving examples of Classical Modernist design, but also immense cultural importance. Every United States President since Herbert Hoover and a long list of notable persons from all fields have stepped through that magnificent lobby and admired the sophisticated urbanism of its interior spaces. These rooms boast streamlined marble and limestone, gorgeous mosaics, artistic bronze work and elegant plasterwork. The serene character of the lobby as well as both the Park Avenue and Lexington Avenue entrances is established by graceful black and cream marble pilasters and wall surfaces, polished marble and mosaic floors, delicate geometric patterns in the ceiling coffers and attention to every fixture and detail. These spaces are landmarks.

If it has not done so already, the Landmarks Commission should move immediately to protect the public spaces in the Waldorf Astoria as it did successfully at the Plaza Hotel when that property was redeveloped. At the Plaza, timely action by the Commission saved the great public spaces in that hotel including the Palm Court, Terrace Room, Lobby, Ballroom, Oak Room and Edwardian Room. Initially the developers had no intention of saving any of these interiors and were unaware of their significance to New York City. As always, the Landmarks Conservancy offers its support and assistance to the Commission to get this important work done.

Sincerely,

  
Peg Breen  
President