



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North New York NY 10007 TEL: 212-669-7700 FAX: 212-669-7960
www.nyc.gov/landmarks



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCT. 30, 2007
No. 07-29

CONTACT: Lisi de Bourbon
212-669-7938

MANHATTAN HOUSE BECOMES A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK

Upper East Side White-Brick Icon Embraced 20th Century European Modernism and Attracted Many Renowned Tenants, Including Grace Kelly and Benny Goodman

The Landmarks Preservation Commission today granted landmark status to Manhattan House, the sprawling full block, modernist apartment and retail complex on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Set between a lush garden, the 21-story, 10-tower structure elevated white brick as a fashionable building material and popularized balconies in many new residential high rises constructed in New York City after World War II.



“Manhattan House set a new standard for apartment construction in New York City and gave modernism a strong foothold here,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “Although Manhattan House inspired many new architectural imitators, very few came close to what it achieved. It joins a growing list of modern landmarks we’ve designated since 2002, such as the Summit Hotel and Socony-Mobil building.”

The New York Life Insurance Company commissioned the New York office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the Chicago-based firm that was at the forefront of the development of modern architecture in the United States, to design Manhattan House. Completed in 1951 and occupying a block between 65th and 66th streets and Second and Third avenues, the building reflects the theories of Le Corbusier, the renowned 20th century French architect who, among other things, was known for setting enormous, slab-like apartment buildings in open spaces.

The footprint of Manhattan House is shaped like a modified capital letter H, with 10 short wings projecting from a longer spine, an arrangement that allows for multiple exposures to light and spacious apartments with a variety of floor plans. The extensive use of glass in the lobby further enhances the building's openness, and blurs the distinction between indoors and outdoors.

Some of the Manhattan House's tenants included such design luminaries as Gordon Bunshaft, the lead architect of the building for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; Elizabeth Potts, founder of the American Institute of Interior Designers and furniture designer Florence Knoll. Actress Grace Kelly lived there for a

More

brief period in the early 1950s, as did jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman, who died in his apartment in 1986, former New York state Governor Hugh Carey and Frank Hardart, co-founder of the Automat restaurant chain. The building, which is owned by real estate developer Jeremiah O'Connor, is currently being converted into condominiums.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is 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 some 24,000 buildings, including 1,180 individual landmarks, 120 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 89 historic districts in all five boroughs. Under the law, 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. There are 11 commissioners, all of whom are appointed by the Mayor for staggered three-year terms.

-30-