

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: LANDMARKS & PRESERVATION

COMMITTEE VOTE:	8 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
PUBLIC VOTE:	0 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused
BOARD VOTE:	34 In Favor	0 Opposed	0 Abstained	0 Recused

RE: LPC request for evaluation of Manhattan Criminal Court Building at 100 Centre Street

WHEREAS: Lower Manhattan is the birthplace of New York City. Respecting and preserving the community's landmarks are critical to preserving the area's social history, architectural character and urban design

WHEREAS: In 2016, Manhattan Community Board 1 District Needs Statement urged the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to "defend Lower Manhattan's architectural heritage" and asked that the Mayor and LPC find funding for adequate enforcement for landmark districts with consideration given "to expanding the footprint of historic districts and designating additional architecturally distinguished buildings that are threatened with redevelopment and merit protection"; and

WHEREAS: The City's recent proposals to replace the existing Manhattan Detention Complex at 124/125 White Street has brought to light the surprising and unfortunate fact that many of the Civic Center's important historic buildings lie outside the existing neighboring historic districts and are not yet landmarked including 80 Centre Street, 137 Centre Street, 139 Centre Street, and the Manhattan Criminal Court Building at 100 Centre Street; and

WHEREAS: The Manhattan Criminal Court Building at 100 Centre Street has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register for architectural significance by the NY State Historic Preservation Office; and

WHEREAS: The Manhattan Criminal Court building (which shares the same underlying City lot with the south tower of the Manhattan Detention Complex) was erected in 1938-41 and is a significant example of the work of Harvey Wiley Corbett (1873-1954), and Charles B. Meyers (1875-1958), architects highly influential in skyscraper design in NYC. The building is an excellent example of NY's art deco style, also called "art moderne", with its successful employment of sculptural massing, vertical emphasis and elegant minimalist detailing. In 1941, at the time of the building's completion, Geoffrey Baker, architectural critic of NY times wrote: "It is the romance of a Hugh Ferriss rendering, a vast depression dream city

cast in stone and steel”; and

WHEREAS: Harvey Wiley Corbett of the firm Helmle, Corbett & Harrison and Charles B. Meyers designed numerous NYC Landmarks including 1 Fifth Ave, the Master Building at 310 Riverside Drive, Bush Tower at 130 West 42nd street, 10 Park Avenue and with Wallace K. Harrison designed Rockefeller Center Charles B. Meyers also designed numerous NYC Landmarks, including the Family Courthouse at 135-43 East 22nd Street, the main building of Yeshiva University and former Municipal Health Building at 125 Worth Street; and

WHEREAS: Given the rapid rate of development in Lower Manhattan, there is enormous risk that without a prompt landmark designation, the Criminal Court building could likely be sold, demolished and replaced with a large-scale tower, as of right; and

WHEREAS: The Manhattan Criminal Court building clearly contributes to the historic context of the neighborhood and is a critical to Lower Manhattan’s social history, architectural character and urban design; and

THEREFORE

BE IT

RESOLVED

THAT: CB 1 urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to act promptly in reviewing and seeking to preserve the Manhattan Criminal Court Building at 100 Centre Street.