



THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

Anthony Notaro, District Manager
Manhattan Community Board One
1 Centre Street, Room 2202 North
New York, NY 10007

September 15, 2016

Dear Mr. Notaro,

The Historic Districts Council is writing in opposition to the proposed removal of the deed restriction at 28 Liberty Street, a.k.a. One Chase Manhattan Plaza. Where the Landmarks Preservation Commission has failed to exercise its powers and save this Modernist masterpiece, this safe guard of a deed restriction--if upheld--will preserve the architectural experience as it was intended to be. In fact, the sheer existence of such a restriction reveals the great foresight and care which went into the planning of this architecture to prevent it from being marred from future, insensitive fads, most relevantly the corporate "Apple Cube." More broadly, the proliferation of recent deed changes which disadvantage the public to serve private entities is deplorable. Any changes should be weighed in the context of the long term: is it wise to permanently alter an individual landmark for the current owner? Do these proposed spaces hold any longitudinal, classical value?

As HDC testified at the LPC public hearing and wrote a follow-up letter for the subsequent public meeting, we are gravely disappointed in the LPC's failure to regulate this property's aesthetic qualities competently, and the deed restriction is further evidence that this building has been failed. Even more disappointing is the proposal for two large glass cubes at the northwest corner and at the Nassau Street and Pine Street entrance. The Nassau Street cube, though smaller than the one at the northwest corner, is particularly egregious due to its interruption of the plaza's flow and the view corridor toward the plaza and of Jean Dubuffet's famed sculpture, "Group of Four Trees". Similarly, the Pine Street cube is a detriment to experiencing Noguchi's "Sunken Garden." The glass cubes, whose function is to simply display signage, would add unnecessary square footage that would disrupt the design intent of this space, cluttering up a masterpiece. The deed restriction was conceived to assure this icon of the International Style would remain open and free from any built structures in perpetuity: please do not lift it.

Sincerely,

Simeon Bankoff
Executive Director

Cc: Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Councilmember Margaret Chin