



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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News Release

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LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION DESIGNATES THE SOCONY-MOBIL BUILDING IN MANHATTAN

On **February 25, 2003** the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the Socony-Mobil Building as a New York City landmark.

Located at 150 East 42nd Street and constructed between 1954 and 1956, this impressive skyscraper fills an entire city block, extending from 41st to 42nd Streets, and from Lexington to Third Avenues. The Socony-Mobil Building was the first, and continues to be one of the largest stainless steel-clad office buildings in the world. *“The gleaming stainless steel panels covering this tower make the Socony-Mobil Building one of New York City’s most striking skyscrapers,”* said Robert B. Tierney, Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. *“It has always been an unofficial ‘landmark’ to the tens of thousands who enter and leave Grand Central Terminal each day; we are delighted to make this landmark designation official.”*



The Socony-Mobil Building was designed in two stages: John B. Peterkin, a consultant to the Goelet estate (the owners of the site), was responsible for the initial scheme, a set-back tower of brick and granite that conformed to the 1916 zoning ordinance. Harrison & Abramowitz, who were at the height of their prestige, joined the team in 1952 and over the next two years the elevations were completely redesigned using man-made materials.

The Socony-Mobil Building exemplifies the trend of speculative office buildings constructed in

New York during the 1950s, with its bulky massing shaped by economics and the new skin lending the building an appealing modern identity. The base is clad with opaque dark blue carrara structural glass that is framed by stainless steel moldings that project slightly forward. Sleek, dark and somewhat reflective, the distinctive color helps distinguish the building from its neighbors, many of which are clad with light-colored brick or terra cotta. Above the fourth story, the architects chose to clad the building entirely in metal. Installation of the seven thousand panels began in May 1955 and was completed seven months later in December 1955.

The Socony-Mobil Oil Company was the chief tenant when the building opened in 1956; its 2,500 employees occupied all or part of twenty-four floors. Tenants enjoyed its then-modern conveniences, including air-conditioning, automatic self-service elevators, and direct access to Grand Central Terminal via an underground passage.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission is the New York City agency responsible for designating and regulating New York City's landmarks.