



The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

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1 CHASE MANHATTAN PLAZA, A MODERNIST SYMBOL OF LOWER MANHATTAN'S RESURGENCE IN THE MID-20TH CENTURY, NOMINATED FOR NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK STATUS

*Completed in 1961 and Designed by Skidmore Owings & Merrill, 60-Story Tower Considered
One of New York City's Most Important Skyscrapers*

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) today voted unanimously to formally consider the designation of 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza as an individual New York City landmark, including its tower, plaza and platform that serves as the base for the anodized aluminum and glass skyscraper. David Rockefeller, former Chairman and CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank, and grandson of Standard Oil founder John D. Rockefeller, helped spearhead the construction of the complex in 1957, and led the revival of a historic neighborhood where few new buildings had been constructed since the Great Depression.



“The City of New York will be forever indebted to David Rockefeller for his vision and refusal to cede its standing as the financial capital of the world,” said Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney. “His commitment triggered the construction of one of the City’s most architecturally significant skyscrapers, and it’s a great honor and privilege for this Commission to consider it for landmark designation.”

“JPMorgan Chase is pleased that the Landmarks Preservation Commission is nominating One Chase Manhattan Plaza for consideration as an historic landmark,” said Frank Bisignano, Chief Administrative Officer, JPMorgan Chase. “While the building is a significant work of post-war architecture, it also proudly reflects our firm’s long-standing commitment to New York’s economic growth and vitality and the innovative leadership of our former Chairman, David Rockefeller.”

Located on a 2 1/2 –acre site between Nassau and William streets to the west and east, and Liberty and Cedar streets to the north and south in the Financial District, 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza was designed by renowned architect Gordon Bunshaft, of Skidmore Owings & Merrill, the firm responsible for such iconic Modernist buildings as Lever House, the Fifth Avenue Branch of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, the Pepsi-Cola Building and Manhattan House. All four are New York City landmarks.

When they were completed in 1961, the shimmering tower and plaza stood in sharp contrast to the masonry buildings along the Financial District’s narrow, twisting streets. The complex’s unusual arrangement – with six floors located beneath the plaza, one of which is above grade – allowed for the installation of a sunken rock garden designed by Isamu Noguchi, the famed Japanese-American sculptor.

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The complex drew widespread attention from the media when construction ended, including former New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, who wrote, “These are ambitious structures of character and quality, surrounded by the most expensive urban luxury money can buy. In a remarkable duality of purpose, reconcilable only in the commercial age, they aspire to be trademark and work of art.”

One Chase Manhattan Plaza also served as a catalyst for the development of other notable office towers in the Financial District, including the Marine Midland Bank Building, the World Trade Center and the World Financial Center.

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 25,000 buildings, including 1,189 individual landmarks, 110 interior landmarks, nine scenic landmarks and 91 historic districts in all five boroughs.

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