



February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

Testimony on the proposed building on the Hotel Commodore/Grand Hyatt Site designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill

Dear Members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission:

We do not want to spend much time parsing what makes this building so inharmonious with Grand Central Terminal: it is too painfully obvious that this oversized and over-expressive tower with pantaloons is not harmonious. It is too big, too muscular, and, frankly, it could be anywhere, across town, in Houston, in Dubai. Wherever.

The Hotel Commodore and other buildings designed as a part of the Terminal City development complemented Grand Central for many years by forming a consistent frame for it. These buildings were related to each other by their height, materiality and relationship to the street.

This is a disaster that has been a long time in the making, starting with the unsympathetic skinning of the undesignated original Terminal City building on this site. A new harmonious facade would be welcome for this historic structure that does not seem to have any difficulty reaching Terra Firma, but the current design is merely an outgrowth of the structural limitations imposed on the new building by the underground activities of the terminal and the surrounding Terminal City.

The Terminal City development and the associated transportation elements are still a functioning significant urban and architectural achievement. The Commission has the responsibility to designate the unprotected buildings that remain from the original Terminal City, in particular the Roosevelt Hotel and the Postum building. The Roosevelt Hotel and Postum building remain as examples of how to be a good architectural neighbor.

We urge the Commission to reject this proposal as obviously inharmonious with Grand Central Terminal and to immediately designate the vulnerable, undesignated buildings that were part of Terminal City, in particular the Roosevelt Hotel and the Postum building. Otherwise, very soon, we will meet again to review similar proposals for those sites.



The Commodore Hotel

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'F' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Françoise Bollack, Chair, Preservation Committee, City Club