THE REGULATIONS FOR REPAIR WORK ON LANDMARKED BUILDINGS - IN THE CASES OF 1930S’ HIGH-RISE HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

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ABSTRACT

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission was established in 1965, and the Landmarks Law was enacted at the same time. Many guidelines and regulations were established for both the staff of Landmarks Preservation Commission and a person in charge of the repair works. Public and private organizations should comply with these regulations when conducting their work. According to Landmarks Law, people who take responsibility for landmark building’s repair works related to the façade have to notify Landmarks Preservation Commission.

High-rise housing was legal to build in New York City since the legislation of Multiple Dwellings Law of 1929. In 1930s, high-rise housing built in Manhattan in a dual-tower mass to fit the law. The objects of this study are those landmark housing building built in 1930s and be used at present in New York City. In this study, I contrast the rules with the repair application form and permit data which were recorded in New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The purpose of this paper is to identify the main content of the repair works related to Landmarks Law, as well as examine and generalize the practice effect of regulations for Landmark buildings’ repair work. I hope to give policy suggestions to cities without landmark preservation organizations.

Keywords: repair work, landmark building, high-rise housing, New York City, 1930

1. INTRODUCTION

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) is the New York City agency that is responsible for identifying and designating the City's landmarks and the buildings in the City's historic districts. The Commission also regulates changes to designated buildings. LPC is composed of 11 Commissioners, and by law must include a minimum of three architects, a historian, a city planner or landscape architect, a realtor and at least one resident of each of the five boroughs. The LPC was established by the Landmarks Law in 1965 in order to [1]

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- Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage.
- Help stabilize and improve property values in historic districts.
- Encourage civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past.
- Protect and enhance the city's attractions for tourists.
- Strengthen the city's economy.
- Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of New York City.

For these reasons, when an old designed building in need of repair, especially for the works related to facade, people who take responsibility for landmark buildings’ management have not only to submit the application to the Department of Building but LPC in New York City.

In this study, I present the practical dual-tower cases – “San Remo”, “Eldorado” and “Ritz Tower”, which were designated as a New York City Landmark in 1987, 1985 and 2002. Dual-tower was a popular building style in Manhattan in the beginning of 1930s. I collected the designation reports, applications and permits related to repair work from New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2008 and 2009. Seeing and generalizing the regulations of LPC by the practical cases. The purpose of this paper is to identify the main heads and their contents of the repair works related to Landmarks Law, as well as examine and generalize the administration of LPC for landmark buildings’ repair work.

2. CONVENTIONAL RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Recent repair work studies have analyzed the investment costs of the life of the modern buildings, looking at the average annual repair work cost [2]. Another study discussed the maintenance plan and design for high-rise housing from the viewpoint of management companies [3]. A number of papers have discussed the green renovation schemes in existing housings.

However, there is little information available on the regulations and management measure of LPC for modern architecture repair projects. In this study, I show the contents of 1930s’ repair projects allowed from LPC, and discuss the details of the repair heads. I hope to know more about the administration of the New York City government from these projects, and then provide useful suggestions on repair work to those cities without department on building preservation at city government.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. On-the-spot investigation

I visited New York City Department of Building, Municipal Archives & City Hall Library and Columbia University Library to search and collect specific architecture history, repair records and
designed reports of high-rise (over 20 stories) housing in March, 2008. At the same time, I visited the high-rise housing buildings built in 1930s in Manhattan, checked if the buildings be used at present or not. Then, to get further information of repair records, I visited LPC in August, 2009.

“A history of housing in New York City” [4] is a credible publication written by Professor Richard Plunz (Columbia University). According to Richard Plunz’s research, I listed the typification of 1930s’ high-rise housing buildings at table 1. The buildings in the list are still be used at present. No 2, 3, 4, 6 designed as a landmark building by Commission. San Remo (No2) and Eldorado’s (No3) repair records are still kept at New York City LPC, San Remo and Eldorado became the major object of this study. Ritz Tower (No1) became the object of this study because of its repair records also kept at Commission and its architect was the same person with San Remo and Eldorado. Architect Emery Roth is a soul character for the high-rise housing development in 1930s [5].

Table 1: Typification of high-rise housing buildings in 1930s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Building Name</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
<th>Architect</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Landmark building</th>
<th>Repair records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ritz Tower</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Emery Roth</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>San Remo</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Emery Roth</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eldorado</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Margon and Holder Emery Roth</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ardsley apartment</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Emery Roth</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>River House</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Bottomley, Wagner &amp; White</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The Century</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Jacques Delamarre Irwin S. and Sloan &amp; Robertson Chanin</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>London Terrace Apartment</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Farrar &amp; Watmaugh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hampshire House</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Caughey &amp; Evans</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Repair work needed permits

In order to protect the character of the city’s landmarks and historic districts, the Landmarks Law requires that owners of landmark buildings apply to the LPC to obtain permits for certain types of work. The Commission reviews proposed changes to ensure that they are architecturally and historically appropriate to the building and the surrounding streetscape within the historic district. “Guidelines and Material Checklists for perform work on landmarked buildings” [6] is intended to serve as a practical guide for owners of landmark buildings contemplating changes to their buildings. The owners or managers of the landmarked buildings have to apply for a permit if they were planned to alter their air conditioners, doors, roof, windows, yards, etc. related to the façade.

In the table 2, I listed the repair works which need permit from the guidelines of LPC. While the works related to install, repair, replace, restore, remove, alternation, a permit will be required from the Commission. The work details could be seen at table 2. I classified repair works into nine (A-I) heads: (A)Air conditioners (B)Awnings (C)Cornices (D) Doors (E)Masonry and Wall Surfaces (F)Roof repair and rooftop additions (G)Stoops, Fences & Handrails (H)Windows I. Yards & Areaways.
A PERMIT FOR MINOR WORK (a "PMW") PMW is issued for work on protected...
architectural features of a designated property when a Buildings Department permit is not required. LPC staff may issue a PMW for projects such as exterior painting, replacing doors or window sashes, installing storm windows, or masonry restoration.

A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (a "COFA") COFA is issued for work that requires a Buildings Department permit and affects the significant, protected features of a building, or when any proposed changes cannot be found to be appropriate by the LPC staff. A COFA may be issued only after the proposal has been brought to a public hearing before, the LPC has been formally approved and, where applicable, any conditions of the approval have been satisfied.

4. 1930S’ HIGH-RISE HOUSING IN NEW YORK CITY

High-rise housing in New York City was first built in the early twentieth century. These earlier high-rise projects were frequently classified as “apartment-hotels”, partly to avoid the restrictions of the Tenement House Law. Since the legislation of Multiple Dwellings Law of 1929, high-rise housing was legal to build eventually. A second generation of high-rise housing construction had developed by 1929. Many high-rise housing built in 1930s in Manhattan in a dual-tower shape to fit to the law. The objects of this study are the high-rise housing landmark building built in 1930s and be used at present in New York City.

The Multiple Dwellings Law, the first legislation to deal comprehensively with high-rise form as luxury housing. For the largest new apartment buildings, on building lots of 30,000 square feet or more, housing “towers” were allowed to rise three times the street width, providing they did not exceed one-fifth of the area of the lot. The lower bulk of such buildings was limited by the same regulations as buildings on smaller lots – approximately one- and three-quarter times the street width. For very large lots, two towers were permitted. The new law led to a brief proliferation of luxury dual-tower high-rise buildings along Central Park West, consisting of towers and a base.

First was the San Remo at West 74th Street, designed by Emery Roth, followed by the Eldorado at West 90th Street, designed by Margon and Holder with Emery Roth. Therefore, this study is focus on the repair work at San Remo and Eldorado, Ritz Tower is illustrated as a contrast example here.

5. REPAIR WORK OF THE 1930S’ HIGH RISE HOUSING BUILDINGS

Table 3 showed the permit records of San Remo (1987 - 2009), Eldorado (1985 - 2009) and Ritz Tower (2002 - 2009) from Landmarks Preservation Commission. A great deal of repair contents is (A) Air Conditioners, (E) Masonry & Wall Surfaces and (H) Windows. For example, in the case of San Remo, architect Dan Allen checked “Guidelines and Material Checklists for Performing work on landmarked buildings” of the Air Conditioners, Wall Surfaces and Windows to fill in the CNE apply form 19 Jan, 2005. Then commissioners checked the photos, drawings, color sample, conditions statement, document of the original design details for repair work according to the upper law “administrative Code of the City of New York” and “Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York”[7], approved the job from 2005 to 2009. Figure 1 shows wall cap (Cloud marking) installed
in an existing window opening at the cellar. The work was approved by Section2-11, “Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York”.

**Table 3: Permit records of San Remo, Eldorado and Ritz Tower**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building name</th>
<th>Issue date</th>
<th>Permit type</th>
<th>Depend on what Rules</th>
<th>Repair work content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eldorado</td>
<td>2000. 03.07</td>
<td>PMW</td>
<td>(A-Code) 25-310</td>
<td>Location: At the Central Park West elevation. (A-3) Installation of three through-the-wall air conditioner units. Location: At the 91st street elevation. (A-3) Installation of two through-the-wall air conditioner units. (E-1) The masonry rebuilt to match the surrounding masonry exactly in all its details. (H-7) The grilles will be centered below the windows and the grilles will be mounted flush with the masonry and painted to match. (H-7) The windows will maintain the bay rhythm of the façade which is established by the fenestration pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritz Tower</td>
<td>2004. 12.06</td>
<td>CNE</td>
<td>NYC DOB Local Law</td>
<td>Location: At the 37th floor and up. (E-1) Repointing terra cotta joints. (E-2) Remove previous patches at brick walls and install new brick masonry to match. Location: in front of the 39th floor louver. (E-3) Clean vegetation from terra cotta. Location: Roof. (F-1) Coat existing copper standing seam roofs with high-performance coating with fabric reinforcement at gutters. Location: at the 42nd floor. (E-1) Repair/replace cracked and deteriorated bricks and terra cotta at the pinnacle of the tower.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. CONCLUSIONS

Repair works issued from Landmarks Preservation Commission

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) inspects repair work projects rationally under the landmark Law. Depending on the different situation, Commission divide permits into three types – CNE, PMW and COFA. In the case of CNE, a person in charge of the repair work which was related to façade, not only have to apply a permit issued to department of building but for the LPC. Even if a Buildings Department permit is not required, a LPC permit is issued for work on protected architectural features of a designated property, this permit called PMW. In this study, there are two CNE, one PMW and one CNE permit records be seen at San Remo, Eldorado and Ritz Tower files at Commission. Repair work comparatively occurred in a smaller scale and not to affect the characteristic of the landmark building.

Many regulations were established for the both the staff of LPC and a person in charge of the repair work. Public and private organizations should comply with these regulations when conducting their work. Commissioners will be checking the repair work depend both the upper law- “administrative Code of the City of New York” and the Commission law – “Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York”. A person in charge of the repair work could check the work which is necessary to apply for a permit or not, and what kinds of the materials should be prepare by checking ‘Guidelines and Material Checklists for Performing work on landmarked buildings’. The advantage is the work will be done in good order and with good reasoning.

Regulations for other cities to care about the modern architecture preservation

Not all of the cities government in the world established public department to manage their city property and landmarks. I hope to give suggestions to those cities about the regulation of the repair work from the policy side by this study. San Remo, Eldorado and Ritz Tower were designed as a landmark in 1987, 1985 and 2002 which the buildings were completed over 80 years. By the case of
the 1930s’ buildings, it’s a good chance for the modern buildings to consider about sustainable issue, because the buildings may be designed as a landmark building several years ago. I think the experience of New York City’s regulations and management and the conclusion of this study will give this kind of buildings proper and meaningful information.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES


