

# Village Views

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*On the cover: One of the two bronze flagstaff bases on the terrace of the New York Public Library. Designed by Carrere, they were executed by Raffaele Menconi and Tiffany Studios.*

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## PIONEERS OF PRESERVATION: PART II

By Anthony C. Wood

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### TAKING THE LONG VIEW

AN INTERVIEW WITH HARMON GOLDSTONE,  
THE SECOND CHAIRMAN  
OF THE LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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The history of preservation in New York City is filled with fortuitous coincidences, and one of them was having Harmon Goldstone in the right place at the right time for a period of over two decades.

Mr. Goldstone helped set into motion the events that led to the creation of the Landmarks Law in the early 1960s when he was a board member of the Municipal Art Society and also served as its president. Later, when the Landmarks Preservation Commission had just been established, he was a member of the City Planning Commission, and helped define the initial working relationship between the two agencies. As a friend and confidant of the first Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Geoffrey Platt, and as the second Chairman of the Commission from 1968 to 1974, Mr. Goldstone played an important role in the development of the early policies of the Commission. His was one of the firm hands guiding the Commission through the difficult and uncharted waters of its first decade of existence.

A fuller knowledge of the Commission's early struggles and of the philosophy of its founders may be of special interest to preservationists at the present critical time. Our municipal government, through a Committee led by Deputy Mayor Robert Esnard, is reported to be drafting legislative changes to weaken the Landmarks Law. We can no longer take it for granted that the Landmarks Preservation Commission as we know it will survive to celebrate its first quarter of a century. Unless the City Council is convinced that the existing law--the fruit of years of study, experience, and judicial tests--is indeed a model statute, we stand a very real chance of seeing the law that the pioneers of preservation worked so hard to establish severely crippled by inappropriate changes.

An Introduction to the Interview

## THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

By Harmon Goldstone

*"The Future of the Past" was written in 1978 as a graduation address for a restoration program sponsored by The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. We would like to thank the Society for permission to reprint these historically interesting observations.*

It seems particularly appropriate that someone as deeply involved as I have been in the history and old buildings of New York City should be introduced to this venerable Society by one of his oldest friends. Your president, John R. Hayes, has known me the entire length of my professional career. Next October will mark the forty-second anniversary of our first meeting in the office of Harrison & Fouilhoux. It was my first architectural job, and, in the depths of the Great Depression, it seemed, and actually was, something of a miracle to have any job at all.

I have not come here, however, to reminisce about the past, but rather to talk about something which I think will affect all of you. And that is: The Future of the Past. Let me explain what I mean by first taking a brief look at the present.

Various straws in the wind suggest that America is reaching a cultural watershed. The approach has been gradual, and at different rates in different fields. Profound changes, such as the one I feel coming, are generally sensed first by artists, so it is to the arts we must look for a hint of what probably lies ahead.

In painting, after a century of experiment and revolution, there is now a surprisingly strong shift towards realism. One critic recently complained that there is no longer any avant garde. Music seems once again to be returning to tunes. Writing is moving from symbolism to naturalism. And in architecture, which concerns us most closely, there seems, on one hand, to be a trend toward a "pop" style, a revolt against good taste, and on the other, a nostalgic reaching toward the past. The first trend is exemplified by Venturi in his search for a new, spontaneous vocabulary to replace the traditional, self-conscious processes of design. The second trend is illustrated by the tongue-in-cheek eclecticism of such bellwethers of fashion as Philip Johnson.

Different though these manifestations may superficially seem, they both represent reactions against impersonal "functionalism"; they both have arisen

from boredom with glass boxes. They are also both striving to re-introduce into architecture some nourishment for human emotional hunger.

Prophecy is always dangerous, but it seems quite safe to predict that while the particular mannerisms of both these current fashions will probably not last long, the impulse behind them will. The force that drives them is essentially the same as the one behind the widespread reawakening of interest in our architectural history and the phenomenal recent growth of a movement to preserve and restore the best of our old buildings. This is something I have been deeply involved in and want to tell you something about.

The start of the landmark preservation movement in the United States is generally traced back to 1850 when General Washington's headquarters at Newburgh-on-Hudson was bought, restored and opened to the public as an historic site. While New York State can thus take pride in having led the way, it must also be admitted that for the next 100 years or so, while other parts of the country were doing something to preserve their best old buildings--New Orleans its Vieux Carre, Boston its Beacon Hill, Washington its Georgetown, Providence its College Hill--New York State simply rested on its laurels. New York City, in fact, was probably the worst offender in the State; as early as 1845, Walt Whitman had referred to its "pull-down-and-build-over-again spirit."

Then, about 25 years ago, a number of things started to happen. A handful of people--ladies with floppy hats and tennis shoes joined by a few crackpots (I was one of them)--began to be seriously alarmed at the rate at which our architectural heritage was disappearing. A 1941 survey across the United States had listed some 6,400 structures as worth saving; by 1963, 2,560 or 40 per cent of them, were gone. But, as the buildings were being torn down, a nationwide effort to stem the tide was growing up. In 1945, only two of our cities had any sort of legal protection for landmarks; twenty years later, there were 64.

In New York City, the little group that cared most about these matters was clustered together in the Municipal Art Society. Founded in 1892, this society is, by New York standards, a venerable institution--though a mere upstart when compared to yours. Yet it has achieved a number of benefits for the City out of all proportion to its size and resources. Not least of these, in my perhaps biased view, is the establishment of a Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Serious work toward this goal began about 1951 when Edward Steese, chairman of the Society's Committee on Historic Architecture, submitted for the Board's consideration a list of buildings worth saving in New York City. The idea for such an inventory is generally credited to Talbot Hamlin who was, for many years, director of the famous Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University. Many additions and deletions were suggested and argued over and the list went

through four mimeographed editions before being published, in 1963, as an illustrated, hard-cover volume. "New York Landmarks", as it was called, was sponsored by the Society and edited by Alan Burnham. It was, and still is, a valuable educational tool.

Concurrently, the Society was also working in other ways to develop a public constituency for preservation. Impressive exhibitions of photographs, drawings and plans of the City's best buildings were held in 1952, 1954 and 1955. In 1956, the Society undertook the initial sponsorship of Henry Hope Reed's famous walking tours, and the next year began collaborating with the New York Community Trust's program of marking important buildings with informative plaques. Even more crucial, as later events proved, was the action, little noticed at the time, of Board member Albert J. Bard, in persuading the New York State legislature to pass, on April 2, 1956, what subsequently became known as the "Bard Law". This empowered municipalities in the State to "provide . . . Special . . . regulations for the . . . protection, enhancement, perpetuation or use (of) places, buildings, structures, works of art and other objects having a special historical or aesthetic interest or value." As far as I have been able to find out, this marked the first time that "aesthetic importance" appeared on New York's statute books as a justifiable purpose for preservation.

But an educated public and enabling legislation were not enough; the political pressure of an aroused public was needed. By 1958, ten per cent of the buildings on the Municipal Art Society's highly selective list had already been torn down. Crisis followed crisis: the old Metropolitan Opera House, Pennsylvania Station and the Brokaw Mansion were all lost despite frantic last minute efforts of concerned citizens. Carnegie Hall was miraculously saved after a cliff-hanging operation. But these constantly recurring, and only occasionally successful battles convinced us that there ought to be some more orderly and efficient way of saving our architectural heritage than intermittent guerilla warfare.

On May 9, 1961, Geoffrey Platt, a fellow Board member of the Municipal Art Society, and I, discussed our problem with James Felt, then chairman of the City Planning Commission. To our surprise, he was sympathetic to our objective and, more important, had the knowledge, which none of us amateurs did, of how to achieve it. He enlisted Mayor Wagner's support, got him to appoint a policy advisory committee, which led to an official commission which guided the long and intricate process of legislative drafting which eventually produced the enactment of Local Law 45 of 1965 amending Chapter 8A of New York City's Charter and Administrative Code.

This rather formidable sounding document, otherwise known as the New York City Landmark Preservation Law, officially came into force when Mayor Wagner

signed the bill on April 19, 1965. It provides for an eleven member Landmarks Preservation Commission to be appointed by the Mayor for three-year overlapping terms. The Commission must always contain at least three architects, one city planner or landscape architect, one realtor and one historian: it must also contain at least one resident of each of the city's five boroughs. A prudent precedent has also become established that there be, among the lay members of the Commission, one or two lawyers familiar with the intricacies of municipal government.

The Commission is empowered, after public hearings, to designate as "Landmarks" structures which are at least 30 years old and which, in the Commission's view, have sufficient historic and/or aesthetic importance to warrant preservation. By a similar process it may designate as "Historic Districts" precisely defined areas of the City whose distinctive character and general level of architectural quality sets them apart from their surroundings. Once designated, no exterior changes or additions may be made to Landmarks or Historic Districts without prior review by the Commission and approval as to their appropriateness. The Commission has effective powers, including criminal sanctions, to enforce its control. If an owner wishes to demolish a Landmark or a structure in an Historic District, he can do so only with the Commission's permission and after a whole series of alternatives have been explored. These may include a recommendations for tax remission, finding new uses or new users, the sale, under carefully controlled conditions, of the unused development potential to surrounding property owners, and, as a penultimate possibility, acquisition by the City at a fair market price. If all efforts fail, the Commission must, under the law, give the owner permission to demolish. Among over 14,000 structures that have been preserved (these include an estimate of the number of individual buildings in designated Historic Districts), only ten have thus far been lost in this way. What was originally mistaken for a weakness in the law has proven to be a hidden strength. It has demonstrated that the preservation law is reasonable and fair; if there really is no viable use for an old building, then this fact has to be faced squarely, unwelcome though it may be. The building simply has to go. What the law does provide, however, is the breathing space--it works out to be about eleven months--in which the Commission is given every opportunity to find a workable solution acceptable both to the City and to the owner.

New York City's Landmark Preservation Law has proven to be one of the most effective in the country and has been used as a model by many other communities. (It is worth noting at this point that between the making of this speech in April, 1978 and its [first] appearance in printed form, the United States

Supreme Court decided in favor of New York City in its ten year battle to preserve Grand Central Terminal. On June 26, 1978 the Court ruled six to three that "the application of New York City's Landmark Preservation Law has not effected a 'taking' of appellants' property" and that the restrictions imposed are substantially related to the promotion of the general welfare. The winning of this "landmark case" has greatly strengthened the preservation movement and enhanced New York City's position as a national leader.)

Since its enactment 13 years ago, the Landmark Law has undergone only one major amendment. On December 17, 1973, the Commission was empowered to designate natural or scenic landmarks, as well as certain publicly accessible interior areas of buildings which are in themselves worthy of preservation. The amendment also removed hitherto burdensome limitations on the periods during which designation hearings might be held, and it mandated the publication of all Commission decisions--even advisory intra-governmental ones.

So much for the origin of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the mechanics of its operations. You will be more interested, I think, in learning what it has accomplished.

As of this morning, April 10, 1978, the Commission had, in the thirteen years of its existence, designated 514 individual structures, 31 Historic Districts (comprising about 13,500 buildings), 6 Scenic Landmarks and 12 Interior Landmarks.

These numbers tell a surprising story. What actually has happened is quite different from what was expected to happen. At the December 3, 1964 hearing before the City Council, when the landmark bill was still under consideration, James Van Derpool testified that he thought that the Commission might ultimately designate about 1,000 individual Landmarks and perhaps three or four Historic Districts--Brooklyn Heights, Greenwich Village and perhaps a Cast Iron District were all that anyone had seriously considered. The actual figures show the designation of only about half of the expected number of individual Landmarks and eight to ten times as many Historic Districts.

This unexpected result can be attributed to the unforeseen reaction of people who live in designated districts. It was not that everyone suddenly became appreciative of the niceties of historic architectural detail--rather that people gradually came to realize that a neighborhood in which there is strict control over architectural appropriateness tends to stabilize in other ways. People began to become proud of the places where they lived. Neighborhood improvement committees sprang up. Self-appointed watch-dogs became quickly alert to suspected violations and to report them to the Commission's staff. The more deeply people began to understand the past history of their community the more

firmly they tend to commit themselves to its future. Historic District designation was, in fact, soon welcomed by city planners as one of the most effective techniques available for urban stabilization. The demand for more and more district designations has risen to such a peak that some of the commissioners now worry about how to retain defensible aesthetic and historic standards in the face of what are often primarily social and economic appeals.

In connection with the designation of individual Landmarks, the Commission's policy of always trying to balance equitably the public interest in preservation against the private concerns of individual property owners has gradually won the confidence of all but diehard opponents. The extent to which the climate has changed can be gauged by contrasting the public hearing in December 1964, when the initial bill was being considered by the City Council, and the hearing, in November 1973, on the amendment to extend the Commission's powers. On the earlier occasion there was considerable opposition; nine years later there was only one pro-forma statement against the proposal and dozens in support of it. As one very knowledgeable real estate broker remarked, "My colleagues do not love the Landmarks Commission but they feel they can live with it."

Landmarks preservation has in fact come of age. It has won nationwide support. It has proven its usefulness as a tool for urban stabilization. And above all, as municipal income has dwindled, the possibility of adapting sound old structures to new uses has given them a important new status.

This is where you come in. "Recycling" is now all the rage. The older cities of America have learned the hard way that they can no longer be so wasteful of the economic potential of their fine old buildings. Talk about dollars and cents is reaching ears that were deaf to arguments about the loss of cultural values. In 1975, recycling and renovation of old buildings represented \$1,000,000,000 worth of work throughout the United States. In 1976, the figure had jumped to \$10,000,000,000 and \$12,000,000,000 is the 1977 estimate. We have come a long way from those little old ladies in tennis shoes!

In the almost 200 years of its history, The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen has always moved with the times. Often it has been ahead of them. There are many "firsts" in its distinguished record, but it is the most recent "first" that interests me the most.

As far as I am aware, the "Restore" course which the Mechanics Institute has been hosting this past year is, in the words of "Building Stone News" (June, 1977), the first time a course has been organized "with the express purpose of upgrading the skills and preservation technology of the skilled mechanic." It has been co-sponsored by a group, which I would venture to say also represents a





The original sketch for the facade  
of the Grand Central Terminal New York  
Whitney Warren  
1910

*A sketch of the design for the south facade of Grand Central Station by Whitney Warren, 1910. It was lent by the Cooper Union Museum to the 1955 exhibition, "Monuments of Manhattan," which is discussed on page 19.*

"first": The New York State Council on the Arts, The Pointing, Cleaning and Caulking Union, Local 66, affiliated with the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, together with our old friend The Municipal Art Society. The organization of the course has been in the hands of a very dedicated young woman, Jan Anderson, which seems particularly appropriate because it was your organization, I believe, which first offered free education to girls. That was back in 1821.

This past year, some thirty-odd students have been learning masonry preservation and restoration techniques. I hope that the program can in the future be expanded to cover preservation and restoration of carpentry and cabinet work, plastering, painting and finishing, as well as metal work. With your unique Mossman collection of locks, a course in historic hardware ought to be a natural.

A great many people have been involved in the landmarks preservation movement. Laws have been drafted and enacted. Commissions have been established. There have been thousands of hours of research into architectural history and building techniques. Dozens of books and hundreds of articles have been written. Tax abatements and financial incentives have been devised, communities educated, political lobbies organized and endless speeches made. But the job of transforming theory into reality--of actually carrying out the work in the way it should be done--depends upon you. The future of the past is, quite literally, in your hands.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH HARMON GOLDSTONE

*This interview was recorded by Anthony C. Wood, on May 12, 1987, at Mr. Goldstone's apartment in New York.*

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MR. WOOD

I'm very interested in Talbot Hamlin, and the lists of landmarks he compiled in the 1940s, long before there was a Landmarks Law. What prompted him?

MR. GOLDSTONE

I can only give an informed guess on that. I knew Talbot, and I took his courses when I went to Columbia; he became a good friend. I don't know what started his lists. I can only guess that they grew out of his wide interest in architectural history.

MR. WOOD

Was Hamlin plugged into the Municipal Art Society somehow, or how did--

MR. GOLDSTONE

I don't think Talbot was active in the Municipal Art Society; he might have been. I'll tell you about a key figure, though, that doesn't appear anywhere: Mrs. Richard Henry Dana. She was exactly my mother's generation--both born and grown up in New York. And she was a good old New Yorker and a good fighter, but she was a very private person. She was on the Board of the Municipal Art Society. When I was a small child, I was terrified of her: she was *formidable*. But then, as I got older--she used to tell me about those meetings of the Municipal Art Society that she'd go to, and she would say, "This Society needs young people, active people; why don't you come on the Board?" I had never thought of doing such a thing; but I liked her so much, I accepted. And Bancel LaFarge, who was also a friend of mine, and an architect--we both went on the Board together. I remember the MAS as a tiny little organization, without any money at all. When we were planning our year's program, we would add up what our capital resources were. Miss Walsh had been the paid secretary for years and years, and she kept a little cardboard box. At the beginning of the year we would empty it out and discover we had \$19.24. And we planned how many postage stamps we could

buy--that was the capital budget for the year. And it was all in the little cardboard box she kept in her desk drawer.

MR. WOOD

In the early fifties?

MR. GOLDSTONE

I would guess so. Here was this bunch of idealistic old fogies--and Albert Bard was on the Board. And years later, I discovered that Albert Bard had gone on that Board the year I was born! And that really gave me a certain perspective, because I thought, "Every month since I was an infant, he's been coming to these meetings--and here he still is!" And of course he was terrific. But these were the kind of people--Ed Steese, and--Alan Burnham, I guess, was maybe a little bit later--but Mrs. Dana knew all of these people, and she was a wonderful, idealistic, driving force in the Society.

MR. WOOD

Was she interested in the preservation of buildings from the beginning?

MR. GOLDSTONE

It's hard to say. She was interested in New York, she was interested in architecture. Her husband was a very good architect. He was of the same generation and quality of say Charles Platt, or Delano, or Mott Schmidt--fine traditional residences, a few schools, a few churches. I hardly knew him. He died when Richard Dana was in college with me. Got pneumonia--and in those days, before antibiotics--pneumonia: you just died. I helped Richard put together a book about his work.

MR. WOOD

Tell me a little about Edward Steese, who chaired the Municipal Art Society's Committee on Historic Structures.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I didn't know him too well, except through the Municipal Art Society and Mrs. Dana. He was passionately interested in traditional architecture and conservation and was a rather fiery, touchy character.

MR. WOOD

I've been trying to get a sense of--you know--the date of the beginning of an interest in preservation with that group of people, and Talbot Hamlin's list of important buildings and Steese's Committee seem to me to be the beginning. Would you agree with that?

MR. GOLDSTONE

As far as I know. But of course I was not in on the beginning. I was a child. In the beginning I was not on that Committee at all, because I wasn't involved. They had a very complicated system of things of first priority, second priority, immediate danger, and so on. That was later dropped, because we felt, as we were getting closer to a real official list, that it would be dangerous, because then someone might say, "Oh, this is only a second-string landmark: let that one go." And we didn't want that: it was a landmark, or it was not.

MR. WOOD

The next step that I found is in the mid-fifties, I guess. There were those exhibitions--

MR. GOLDSTONE

That's right. Now that is about the start of any connection that I had, other than Talbot Hamlin asking, "Would you read over this list? Would you make any additions or subtractions?" Then there was Alan Burnham, and Ed Steese. They distributed the lists among architects and people they thought were generally interested in New York, or old New York. I did some editing.

MR. WOOD

So they put the information together, and the exhibits grew out of that.

MR. GOLDSTONE

The exhibits grew out of that. The Municipal Art Society was a vehicle that put on a show. We had one very good one at the University Club, in the back room. It included that marvelous huge rendering of the Vanderbilt House on 57th Street. It was a section, a cross-section. It took up the whole wall.

MR. WOOD

It must have been dramatic.

MR. GOLDSTONE

The Vanderbilt house at 57th Street--every room was shown on the evening of a dinner party, and what was going on: Mrs. Vanderbilt was getting dressed, the maid was getting out her jewels, and Mr. Vanderbilt was tying his white tie, and in the kitchens, the cooks were getting everything ready, and the coachmen--it was like a doll's house. It was a marvelous, rendered section. I don't know where it is now--either the New-York Historical Society or the Museum of the City of New York.

MR. WOOD

What was the reaction to those exhibits?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Oh, people were very interested. They opened their eyes. This was something they hadn't realized--you took these things for granted, you see. They were always there, old New York. Only a handful of people were interested. I don't know who invented the term, but it certainly was applicable: this was "the lunatic fringe." A few perfectly nice, harmless people, amusing themselves with old New York. And they weren't doing any harm--

MR. WOOD

Did the exhibits tend to expand the number of this "lunatic fringe?"

MR. GOLDSTONE

I think so. They stimulated some newspaper articles, and people became interested. I think they probably helped. But it was really Alan Burnham and Ed Steese--

MR. WOOD

They were the driving forces behind the exhibit and the lists?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Oh, yes--and Talbot Hamlin. And Mrs. Dana, in a very quiet way.

MR. WOOD

In talking to Geoffrey Platt--he had commented that he thought that some of the support for preservation was a reaction to Robert Moses. Do you share that feeling?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, I wasn't aware of it at the time. It may have been--or it may have been a subconscious reaction: the general feeling was--or, at least, this may be purely personal--that Moses was a hero: he was the white-haired boy. And I think I said later in some speech, "I spend half my life on platforms handing him awards, and the other half attacking him in the press." But, in the beginning--oh, we just thought he was marvelous. He was the one person who could get things done in the city, and he also was an "idealist"--put that in quotation marks--and enormously experienced. He was our hero. Now later...

MR. WOOD

Wasn't it at the later time that there was the Castle Clinton situation?

MR. GOLDSTONE

And we realized how ruthless he was. In the beginning, maybe he was pulling the wool over our eyes. I don't know. He could be one of the most charming people you'd know; when he wanted, he could charm blood out of a stone. Just delightful. And he wrote beautifully, a great stylist, and he was very literate, very articulate, spoke very well--and the charm! But when there began to be a confrontation, the charm could disappear very rapidly. And so, I've been very ambivalent about him. There was a piece in the paper--

MR. WOOD

Today [*The New York Times*, May 12, 1987] on that tour that the Municipal Art Society gave--[visiting several City projects built under Robert Moses.]

MR. GOLDSTONE

Exactly. Arnold Vollmer led it. I knew Arnold Vollmer in those days. And there's no question that Moses was a great hero, doing something for the city. His ruthlessness and what he was uprooting--we all know he had very little aesthetic discrimination, but he had wonderful political skills. And people--we all

sort of subconsciously thought, well, others will take care of the aesthetics. That was the feeling at that time.

MR. WOOD

Another figure that we touched on briefly, but I want to try to find out more about, is Albert Bard, and the law he was responsible for--[Enacted in 1956 by the New York State legislature, the Bard Law was an enabling act which empowered municipalities to protect buildings because of their historic or aesthetic value. It provided the foundation for the New York City Landmarks Law.] Do you think he expected New York City to use that sooner?

MR. GOLDSTONE

I don't have any idea. You see, I didn't know him well till much later. And it was a wonderful experience to meet this old man. He was tiny, very frail, and absolutely indomitable. Now, I can tell you a couple of stories about Albert Bard.

MR. WOOD

Yes?

MR. GOLDSTONE

He was on the side of the angels, always, with the good government people. There was some issue before the Board of Estimate, a hearing. I felt very strongly about it, and Albert felt very strongly about it, and quite a few other people, Arthur Holden, and others. We sat there all day, and this controversial issue was put up for second call, you know--

MR. WOOD

Right.

MR. GOLDSTONE

--when there's a lot to clear on the calendar--and a third call; and Albert was, I would say, about ninety, and very frail. He had gone out and gotten a bowl of crackers and milk for lunch, and I sort of held his place, till he came back; but I thought, "He's going to collapse, he's going to faint." I said, "Why don't you let me have your statement: I will read it on your behalf, as well as my own statement." "No, no! I can attend to my own statement." He wouldn't leave! So finally, everybody else had left, and it must have been about nine o'clock at night, and he

got up and made a most impassioned speech, strong voice and everything else. Then the Board of Estimate went into executive session right then and there, and came back in fifteen minutes, and they turned us down. And I thought, well now he's going to collapse, after sitting there for twelve hours. And I said, "Let's go and get some supper." And it's very hard to find anything open at that hour near City Hall, and we walked--he was almost blind with cataracts. We went to--Child's was open, and I got him some light supper. And he said, "Now I don't want you to get discouraged by this. We've lost this one--but we're going to win the next one." And here I was, thinking he was going to collapse, a hospital case--and here he was bucking me up! I never got over that. And then I said, "Can't I see you home?" He lived somewhere in New Jersey, in the suburbs, and he was almost blind. He called up his housekeeper, and told her he'd be late, said he was on his way. "No, you can see me to the head of the stairs of the Hudson Tube; I'm perfectly capable of going home by myself!" But that was what made him what he was. And the other story that I like, if you--

MR. WOOD

Oh, yes, I like this, tell me more about him.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, of course, you see, he was very much of another generation, and his taste was very, very conservative. I was much more involved with the modern things that were coming in just then. He came to one of our meetings, and he had photographs of a new building--I can't remember what it was--in New York, proposed, or just built. I would say it was mildly modern, you know, sort of Swedish modern or Danish modern. And he handed it to me, and said, "What do you think of this? Isn't it outrageous? Can we let a thing like this be built in New York? Shocking!" So, Tony--I had an inspiration: Mrs. Dana was on my other side, and they were near contemporaries. I said, "Well why don't we pass it round the table, and see what everybody thinks." Tactful. And the first person I passed it to was Mrs. Dana, and she said, "Well, this is very good. I think this is excellent." And he said, "Natalie, how were you brought up? How did you form your taste? How could you say such a thing?" And the two of them went at it with hammer and tongs, and the rest of the Board just melted away and left them there. It was one of the funniest things I've ever seen. We thought, they can fight it out between themselves.



MR. WOOD

A diplomatic stroke of genius on your part. In the notes you were kind enough to share with me, that you'd written on the history of the Commission, you referred to the "cliff-hanging operation that only just rescued Carnegie Hall from destruction, that shocked the Municipal Art Society Board into full awareness of the crisis." Do you have memories of that?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, I was not personally involved with that, really; I can't take any credit for that one. It seemed like a totally lost cause at the time, because you had all the steamroller pressure of Lincoln Center coming along; and, obviously, they didn't want a competing concert hall. But I think it shocked a lot of people. The issue about that time, maybe even a little before, that I was very active in was the Huntington Hartford cafe that was proposed for Central Park. This was one I really fought on. It was to be at 59th Street, going down from Fifth Avenue, and looking over that little lake. And Huntington Hartford was going to take a big bite out of Central Park. And, as President of the Municipal Art Society, that was something I cared about very deeply, because I cared about the preservation of Central Park. And we fought him and fought him, and we won. We did not have any support from the City Parks Commissioner, because Bob Moses supported the cafe and his view still carried a lot of weight.

MR. WOOD

Oh, yes.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Newbold Morris was Parks Commissioner at that time--Newbold was a good friend of mine, and of Mrs. Dana, but he took the official line on the proposed cafe; as I remember, he was no help at all. In other things, he was.

MR. WOOD

In the same time period, I think winter 1961, you mentioned that there was "an esteemed member of the Municipal Art Society, who drafted a piece of legislation that was intended to provide the sort of protection we all wanted for our architectural heritage. It was an extremely complicated document--none of us, including the Society's counsel, Ed Finch, could understand how it worked." Was that Arthur Holden who drafted that?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Arthur's a sweet guy, his heart's in the right place. He was an architect, a very nice and idealistic person. Did you know him at all?

MR. WOOD

No, I didn't, though the name comes up a lot.

MR. GOLDSTONE

He wrote a book of poems on real estate problems in New York--an unpromising subject--but very interesting; he was an original! And he drafted this thing. Well, I read it; and I think Geoff [Platt] read it, and I gave it to Ed Finch: he couldn't make head or tail of it. You know, legislation is a very, very difficult thing to write; and I had to be terribly tactful, because Arthur was so nice, and he was so much my senior. I said, "We've gotten out of our depth; this is no job for amateurs; we ought to turn this over to the pros." And that was the thing that led to the phone call to Jack Felt, [then Chairman of the City Planning Commission] whom I had never met. But I had watched in the papers what he was doing with other things in the city, and he seemed like a good guy. And I called him up, and said, "We've got something we'd like to get your advice on. And unbeknownst to Geoff and me--because we did this together--he had been looking for a vehicle to do something about preservation, and he didn't--from his real-estate, city point of view--know whom to talk to, who were the responsible people; he didn't want to get into some kind of hornet's nest, and he also wanted guidance. It was the most wonderful coincidence.

MR. WOOD

Did Felt ever tell you, or give you some insight into what had made him interested in it at that time?

MR. GOLDSTONE

I don't know. No, we never really discussed it. Other than the fact that he was brilliant, idealistic, and a humanist. He did tell me once that he had wanted to be a rabbi, that he had studied to be a rabbi. He was very--he had a streak of idealism that was, I would say, active idealism. This came through in his city planning. And so, when he saw a group waiting, he was eager for that luncheon we had together--

MR. WOOD

Yes, tell me--I know the date I got was May 9, 1961--

MR. GOLDSTONE

I think that's right, yes.

MR. WOOD

And that was what I would call the famous "wonderful lunch" that was a result of your contacting Felt--

MR. GOLDSTONE

I just called him up absolutely cold; he didn't know who I was, and I said, "Would you come and have lunch with Geoff Platt and me, we want to talk to you about something." And then I learned later from his secretary that we had called him at just the right psychological moment. So he accepted at once.

MR. WOOD

And out of that lunch came the letter that went to Mayor Wagner.

MR. GOLDSTONE

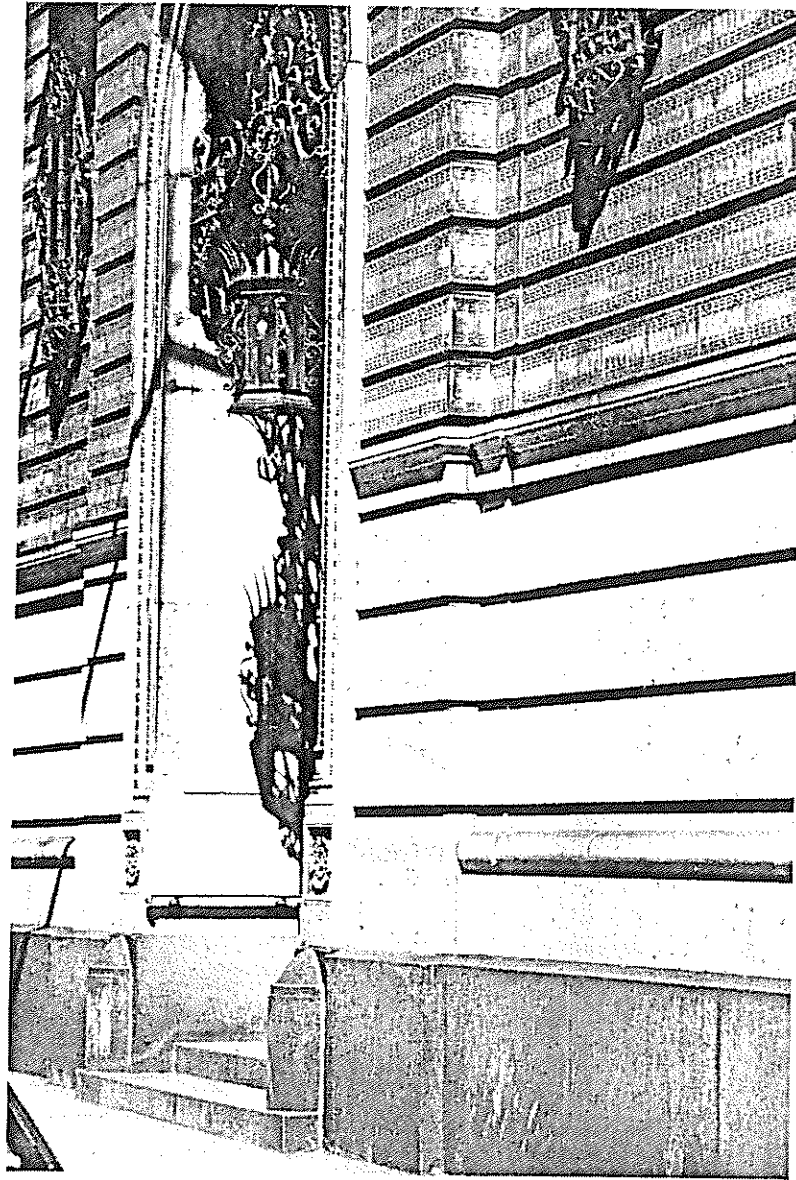
Exactly. And then, I think also, you see, there was a second coincidence: we had watched what Felt was doing in regard to other things in the city, and the Municipal Art Society had decided to give him a medal or award at our annual meeting; that was the first time I'd met him. And I think the award was the day before our luncheon.

MR. WOOD

You're right. I looked at the date, and what a coincidence! He got the award the night before.

MR. GOLDSTONE

You see, the problem was sort of in the air--but it wasn't part of any diabolical plot to give him an award, and then put the screws on him. It was quite independent.



*The Century Club, the scene of "the famous 'wonderful lunch'," at which Harmon Goldstone, Geoffrey Platt, and James Felt planned the creation of a landmarks law for New York City.*

MR. WOOD

In his remarks when he accepted the award, did he--

MR. GOLDSTONE

Yes, he said something; I probably have clippings on that. And that was when we felt: he's coming to our lunch meeting already primed. There was no struggle with Jack Felt: he was eager to help.

MR. WOOD

He was a convert.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Exactly. He was looking for a vehicle. And then, before we got up from table, he said, "Now the thing to do is, you write a letter to Bob Wagner, and then I'll help you." He really wrote the letter. Well, I didn't know any protocol, what you do when you want--

MR. WOOD

He was the ghost writer?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Exactly. And an awfully good one. And he walked the letter through channels, and within a couple of weeks, he had this committee appointed, and everything else. Felt was the catalyst; we couldn't have done it without him. And he became a great friend.

MR. WOOD

One of the things I was wondering--in talking with Geoffrey Platt, he had commented that Felt had once told him during this process, "You're going to lose some buildings during this period, and don't let it bother you: you're just going to lose them." And I was wondering, do you think Felt was referring to Penn Station in that? That must have been a hard situation for everyone.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I really don't know. But of course it was a hard situation for him, because, you see, his brother was the real estate developer--and Jack had also been in real estate. And his brother was the prime mover on--

MR. WOOD

Penn Plaza--

MR. GOLDSTONE

That place around there; and I think Jack was very fond of his brother. But I think they had different goals entirely. It was rather difficult for him. We didn't discuss it, obviously.

MR. WOOD

I wondered if Felt had ever made any comments to you about Penn Station, just in passing.

MR. GOLDSTONE

No. No. Felt was very experienced--he was wise. And there are very few people that are wise. Lots of other people have plenty of knowledge--expertise, drive, and so forth; but wisdom, humanity--none of them were in his class. He was a great, warm human being. And I remember lots of things he told me, that have lasted through the rest of my life. When I'd get all uptight about some problem that seemed absolutely insoluble, I'd go to Jack and say, "What shall I do?" And he would say, "Just float, just float." And I often leaned heavily on him. He was a rare combination: somebody with equal parts of technical knowledge and idealism--one of the truly great people of this city. Bob Wagner had a great deal of respect for him. It was Felt's rare combination of qualities that was one of the reasons things went so smoothly.

MR. WOOD

Was Felt himself involved in the process of drafting the Landmarks Law? Or did he just really help set it in motion and keep it going?

MR. GOLDSTONE

I think he helped set it in motion; and then it got turned over to the Corporation counsel, and Morris Handel took over, and Bernard Friedlander, and several others: they were the people that worked like dogs on the drafting. And Lee Rankin was another extraordinary person. He was the Corporation Counsel--that may have been just a little later. He held my hand through the Grand Central Terminal case. He was a rock, and he's still around: he's a great lawyer. And I remember--I felt very guilty because he was spending all his time advising me! You know, when I was on the Commission, I'd call him up and say, "Would you have one of your lawyers check this matter before it goes out?" "You bring it over, I want to check it myself." And we became great friends. But I'm jumping to a later period.

MR. WOOD

Let's jump to Grand Central. There was the designation and then the two Certificate of Appropriateness Hearings on the proposed tower.

MR. GOLDSTONE

There was one that took place with Geoffrey as Chairman, and then I came in, and inherited the Certificate of Appropriateness application. And then an error was discovered--with all this army of lawyers--we had endless hearings, I think for three days--and the lawyers had made a mistake in the metes and bounds of the property. The biggest lawyers imaginable, for Penn Central. And we didn't pick it up, but somebody in the audience picked it up, and in the Public Hearings, said "I don't think the property is properly described." And, lo and behold, we couldn't believe it, but it wasn't. They had made their application include a parcel they didn't own. So the application was invalid. We had the option of throwing out the whole thing, since it was an invalid request--but we decided not to, because the case was too important. So we gave them a month to amend their papers--their faces were very red--and re-submit it; and so then we had another hearing. And we agreed that all the substantive record of the previous hearing could be transferred to the new one, because it was only a technicality, and we didn't want to throw it out on a technicality.

MR. WOOD

When the proposal came in for the tower over Grand Central, was there ever a point when it was really thought that it might be approved? I mean, was it an open question?

MR. GOLDSTONE

We had some wonderful staff people, and they were very supportive, and more experienced than I was. And yet, one of my key people said, "We can never stand up to this power; we're going to have to knuckle under on this one." Well, I didn't agree with that. We got through the hearings, and had all the arguments summarized. And I went over to get Lee Rankin's advice. He would spend hours with me, and he would work out alternative scenarios: if you do this, then Penn Central will do that, and so on. And I said, "What shall I do?" And he said, "That is up to you. I am your lawyer, and I'm giving you my best advice on the risks you're running, and the procedures, and the options, but the decision is yours." And it was a very lonely position, but he was absolutely right; he said, "I'm not going to tell you what to do." But he also said, "Whatever you decide, I will back you and defend you with everything I've got; I mean, you know I'm behind you whatever you decide." But he quite rightly wouldn't help make decisions. So then we went back into Executive Session, with the full Commission; everybody was there. And we just went around the table, clockwise. I said, "I want you all to just speak your piece." They weren't interrupted, and everybody just said what they thought. It turned out that they unanimously wanted to turn down the application: they all had personal slants, and different reasons for doing so. I was the last one. I hadn't wanted to influence them, Tony, I didn't want to get in their way; I wanted their independent opinion, because it was a Commission. And so when they said, "Well, what do you think?" I said I had already drafted an opinion, and if they had all agreed the other way, it would have been a minority opinion of one! Up to that point, I don't think any of them knew how I had made up my mind. When I told Rankin this, he said, "That is marvelous; you've really got an independent, unanimous opinion. Nobody was railroaded. If that comes out in the appeal, as it will, that's really wonderful. That's wonderful!"

MR. WOOD

It must have taken a lot of courage, to really dig the feet in on Grand Central! In talking to Geoffrey Platt, he indicated that because the Commission in those early years was so new, it had to be very careful in the fights it picked, and in everything else.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Oh, absolutely, I mean, of course, we always had firebrands on the Commission, and if somebody had six panels on their Federal door instead of eight panels-- "Take them to court! Sue them! Forbid it!" And, you know, they would say,



"They've also got the wrong doorknobs!" It sometimes seemed I spent three-quarters of my time fighting my friends, because I took the point of view, rightly or wrongly, that until we are on really solid ground, let's just take it easy on some of these relatively secondary things. But when it came to Grand Central, I said, we may well be torpedoed, but let's go down with all the flags flying--

MR. WOOD

Bravo!

MR. GOLDSTONE

And the Commission was marvelous: I had really a hundred per cent backing. And, you see, the fact that they'd independently come to this view was awfully important. No arm-twisting or anything: they all agreed, independently.

MR. WOOD

After the Commission made its decision, you must have been involved in helping put the defense together.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I was very much involved with the actual writing of the report turning the application down. That was the basis, of course, for all the lawsuits. . . . Now there was another difficulty on this whole thing: Breuer was an old friend of mine.

MR. WOOD

Oh. I didn't know that.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I had known him ever since he came over--after Hitler closed down the Bauhaus; and we had had a very amicable relationship--I knew his wife, and I knew him, and we were very good friends. And when this thing first came up, when I was in the process of taking over from Geoff, I had one session with Breuer. I said, "I think this is going to be a big, hot, issue, and we are old friends, and I value our friendship very much, and I just think we better not meet any more; we better not have any discussions; we better do all the discussing through the lawyers, because I don't want any personal involvement." And he agreed; he was very intelligent about it. But it was a difficult step to take, at the very beginning.

MR. WOOD

Did the friendship survive the legalities?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Oh, yes. Oh, yes! We put it in a watertight compartment.

MR. WOOD

Well, the Grand Central fight, of course, is the great milestone, legally. Now, as it went through the courts, one key decision went against us, and I heard someone say that there was some thought in the city of not appealing that, of just accepting that.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Judge Saypol wouldn't render a decision for almost a year. You know, a judge can do this. I think he just hoped it would all go away by itself. By the time the appeal went to the Supreme Court I was out of city government. I was only involved in the initial hearings and trial, and the writing of the Landmarks Commission opinion turning the whole thing down. Of course, I obviously was still interested--

MR. WOOD

Sure, but you were out of the hot seat.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I was out of the hot seat, and glad of it. By then we'd done what we could.

MR. WOOD

Prior to your becoming Chairman of the LPC, you had gotten a dose of city commission involvement through being on the City Planning Commission. How did that happen?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well now, you see this was again a case of extraordinary luck; things just seemed to grow together, as I told you. The coincidences! Well, while we were reviewing

drafts of the proposed legislation, both Geoff and I were seeing Felt at least once a month; we'd generally go his apartment on Central Park West and talk to him, but we were not part of the city government. And just at that time, there was this big real estate man--

MR. WOOD

Oh, Lindenbaum.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Lindenbaum. He--well, you know, people have done worse things since--he was overzealous, and he used his position to raise funds for Bob Wagner, and it was not the right thing to do. So he had to be dropped, or resign. I always felt sorry for him, because he was basically a decent guy. He just didn't see the proprieties. So after that, I remember Jack saying, "I'd like very much to get a practicing architect on the City Planning Commission." And he would suggest, "What would you think of so-and-so?" And, of course, it was off the record--"good", or--off the record--"terrible." And finally--this came out of the blue--he said, "How would you like the job?" And I was flabbergasted. I really had never thought of such a thing. So--"Well, certainly, it's very interesting; let me think it over." And I invited my brother for dinner, and he's a lawyer--a very hard-bitten lawyer, and very practical--and he said: "Bob Wagner obviously thinks that you can do this job--I don't. But--"

MR. WOOD

Brotherly love, there--

MR. GOLDSTONE

He knew Bob Wagner much better than I did, they'd been in the same class at Yale. He didn't know him well, but he said, "I defer to his judgment, and you can afford to do it." Because it meant giving up a lot of my private architectural work for the City. And he said, "Anybody that has the opportunity of public service and can afford to do it, simply cannot say no." You know, I've never been more surprised in my life. So next morning I called up Jack Felt and said I would do it.

MR. WOOD

Well, it was so fortuitous, too, having you at the City Planning Commission when the Landmarks Law was being created--

MR. GOLDSTONE

Again, it was very lucky, because, when the Landmarks Commission came into effect, and there were an awful lot of inter-governmental things to be ironed out, I was in a very strategic place at this critical time. I can remember distinctly: the first designation came, and according to the law, it had to be circulated. And the text came over to us--by this time, I was with the Planning Commission. And the members of the Commission--all of whom were fine people and good friends--they started saying, "Well, you know, this building really isn't that good or that important." They started arguing on those things. And I said, "Now look. This is not our job: it has been decided by the Landmarks Commission. All our job is, is to determine if it interferes with any public improvement that we know of? Have we got a school going on that site? Have we got a highway going through it that will cause a problem? Or is it free and clear of our jurisdiction?" And it was. So I said, "O.K. Whatever we think of what those long-haired lunatics decide to designate, that is their responsibility." And thank heavens I was there at that moment, because that kind of overlapping jurisdiction never came up again. We were just lucky that when that first one came down the line--

MR. WOOD

You got them on the right track.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Exactly. And also, another thing--Frank Blaustein was Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission--a very knowledgeable lawyer, under Jack Felt. He knew the mechanics of city government very well; and when one of the drafts of the Landmarks Law was circulated, Frank Blaustein tore it to ribbons. And I was very upset, because, I thought, he just doesn't like this long-haired, idealistic thing, and I thought he was just sabotaging it. What he was doing, which I didn't appreciate till later, was making a crystal-clear separation between the powers of Landmarks and the powers of City Planning. Some of the difficulties in other cities have arisen because that division was not made. And I blessed Frank, and later I told him that I had misjudged him. Later, the draft went back to the Corporation Counsel, and was thoroughly revised to make the desired clear separation. I always tried to keep the two apart--they're two different functions. But not everyone sees it that way. People are always trying to use the Landmarks Law for purposes for which it was not intended.

MR. WOOD

There are a couple of special provisions of the zoning resolution to help Landmarks--one is, as you know, the air-rights transfer you can do to save a landmark, and there's the other one, where you can get a variance from certain zoning requirements in order to have a new building that better relates to a landmark. Do you feel these have been used well?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, in the beginning, Frank Gilbert was on the Landmarks staff--he was a lawyer, and very bright and imaginative; and I think the idea of the transfer of unused development rights, as far as I'm concerned, came to me from him. Whether it was his original idea or someone else's, I don't know. I was very enthusiastic, because it was very hard to find a way to give something back to a non-profit, non-commercial organization that owned a landmarked building. I thought it was a wonderful way out. Now, later, there have been all sorts of attempts to extend that idea, and to leap-frog the unused development rights of a landmark site. Norman Marcus--do you know him?

MR. WOOD

Oh yes. Yes.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, he was very much aware of the problems involved in that, because he and I were up to our necks in trying to get an equitable way of doing this. And, to answer your question point-blank, I can't give you a very satisfactory answer. I think sometimes the transfer of development rights has been used well, and sometimes, it's been over-used, or ill-advised.

MR. WOOD

It's case-by-case?

MR. GOLDSTONE

It's a case-by-case thing; but it is a dangerous thing to misuse, and I think some of the backfire against the Landmarks Law has come from attempts to misuse it.

MR. WOOD

One other thing--during the process when the law was being drafted and the Mayor's Advisory Committee was doing its stuff--when, of course, the actual demolition of Penn Station began, and there were the pickets and things. What was the feeling--it must have been--I mean, here were the people on the inside, working to create a law as fast as they could, and then, to have that kind of public demonstration, outside--what were your thoughts on that?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, as a matter of fact, you see, my personal motivation for working to make landmark protection a regular, permanent part of the city government had been stimulated by the experience of a couple of similar crises before. The battle to block Huntington Hartford from building a cafe in Central Park was a typical case. One pulled together an ad hoc committee of wonderful volunteers, organized torchlight processions and marches, issued pamphlets and so forth. Loads of fun. But it was a very wasteful procedure, because the minute one battle was over, the next one came up, and you had to go through the whole thing all over again. Of course once in a while it's very valuable to go through these things, because they're good for morale and public education. But both Geoff and I--and I think I'm free to talk for him--felt that landmark protection should be an orderly, calm, legal procedure that would take care of itself automatically. Many of my activist friends--I still have a few of them left--hate me, because I took all the fun out of it for them. They loved these demonstrations, taking trains to Washington to talk to the Supreme Court. That doesn't accomplish very much. Not in my view. To a certain extent, yes: the publicity, the public relations, and the whoopdeedo--you have to have a constituency; I will grant this. I don't like it, I don't like public actions, I'm a much more private, orderly, systematic person. And there are still many of these self-appointed committees, and self-appointed organizations, dozens of them who don't realize we have a law, we have a procedure, we have a method, and they--they hate it--they're out of a job. You see, they love the free-lance excitement--and then, you see, when they didn't have to be politically appointed, they didn't have to take any responsibility for what they are doing. Because though you can feel very passionately, if you're part of the government, you're going to be held responsible for what you do. If you're going to march in torchlight processions, nobody's going to hold you responsible for anything.

MR. WOOD

Actually, I've got a copy of Village Views here, and according to the chart there, on designations, you come out as one of the long-haired radicals.

MR. GOLDSTONE

That completely amazed me. When I saw that chart, I couldn't have been more amazed. But there's a very good explanation, it's Greenwich Village--

MR. WOOD

The size of that district--

MR. GOLDSTONE

Exactly. I was always looking for maintaining high standards for what we were designating, and I will have to confess, I thought the idea of just picking out the best blocks in Greenwich Village was sensible. But I was wrong; Rankin felt very strongly that, legally, you couldn't whittle this District away. And even though there were some dogs included within the boundaries, it was more important to have one clearly distinct area. And so I'll admit that I was wrong. I learned a lot. Of course, as far as the community was concerned, I had my head handed to me!

MR. WOOD

What!

MR. GOLDSTONE

Not that I worried about it.

MR. WOOD

Now you had the opportunity to serve both under Mayor Wagner and under Mayor Lindsay.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Yes, I did.

MR. WOOD

Do you think Mayor Wagner really had a feeling for preservation, or was it purely political?

MR. GOLDSTONE

No, I think he was very sincere. He was very cautious, and he was very wise. And I think he felt that landmark protection was awfully good for the city; he was always very supportive.

MR. WOOD

What about Mayor Lindsay?

MR. GOLDSTONE

Lindsay was also very supportive. I remember when he swore me in to the Landmarks Chairmanship, he said, "If you need my help, yell!" Well, obviously, I didn't take advantage of that unnecessarily. But I have a couple of stories about him I'm happy to tell you. Usually, for the appointments to the Commission, the Chairman submitted a slate to the Mayor's Office--and it was terribly complicated, because of all these rules. [By law, the membership of the Commission must include "at least three architects, one historian qualified in the field, one city planner or landscape architect, and one realtor. The membership shall include a least one resident of each of the five boroughs."] And I used to spend hours with Geoff, and he with me, working back and forth--it's very hard to get the required distribution. On one occasion there was strong political pressure for an appointment that I objected to. There were letters back and forth, and telephone calls to the Mayor's office, and I was pretty stubborn. And so, he said, "Come over, let's talk about it in my office." So I went over, and he had some of his advisors there, the political advisors. And I said my piece, why I didn't want this appointment. After about half an hour of argument, he said, "Well, this is your show, you've got to run it. And if you feel that way, and that strongly, I will take your advice." I was very relieved. Actually, within my own mind, if he'd made the appointment, I think I would have resigned.

MR. WOOD

You had a strong opinion on the topic.

MR. GOLDSTONE

It was certainly more than just a whim. And so I said, "Well, since you have been so nice as to do this--and I know the pressures that have been on you--I will gladly take full blame. I have no political stake in this, and I don't care what people say about me." He said, "No, that's *my* job." My admiration for him went up



enormously. My other story is about the way he resolved the whole mess of Sailor's Snug Harbor, which is a book in itself. The Mayor, according to Captain Randall's will, is an ex officio member of the Board, but all Mayors, including Lindsay, have traditionally resigned. And then the Landmarks Preservation Commission got into a head-on confrontation with the rest of the Trustees who wanted to demolish those wonderful Greek Revival buildings. I told the Mayor. He said, "Well, you know, I could go back on that Board; I resigned, but I have a right to sit on that Board"--and he did. He absolutely flabbergasted the rest of them: it was his crucial intervention at that point that turned the whole thing around.

MR. WOOD

He was really key in the whole Snug Harbor?

MR. GOLDSTONE

He was key. It was wonderful.

MR. WOOD

One question I didn't ask earlier: in the original version of the Landmarks Law, there was a provision for a periodic moratorium on new designations. There was a moratorium in 1970, in your time-period. What was the story on that?

MR. GOLDSTONE

That was a tactical move in winning Council approval of the bill. Of course, there was a lot of opposition from the real estate people. And Geoff was involved in this and I was not, because I was on City Planning--but as a sop to the opposition, the sponsors of the Bill said, "Let's have three years of designations, and one year without." That was a compromise, because, quite frankly, the Real Estate Board and some of our dearest friends thought, "This idiotic piece of legislation is obviously unconstitutional: give us a year to have it in the courts, and we'll be rid of it; and all the preservationist hullabaloo will die down." But, as you know, that didn't happen. After the Grand Central case, that provision was taken out.

MR. WOOD

Yes, right, in 1973, when the law was amended.

MR. GOLDSTONE

But if we had fought for the full thing right from the beginning, we might not have gotten a law at all. That was where the zealots don't know how to bend, or when to bend. We were being a little more realistic, and we got what we wanted. And it was the same with designating interiors. That was also brought in--

MR. WOOD

In the same 1973 amendment.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Yes. In the beginning, we all said, that's going to be hopelessly difficult, that's going to be an invasion of privacy. We'd better stay away from that hornet's nest. We tried to get the essentials of the law, and let people get used to it, and let them live with it, and discover we were not ogres and monsters, and that they could--I wish I could remember now, I wish I could think of who it was, that said--"Well, I don't love you, but I can live with you," And they learned that we were fair. That was the main thing.

MR. WOOD

I understand that Jack Felt was helpful in that way.

MR. GOLDSTONE

I don't know what he did, but I realize he was awfully influential with the Real Estate Board. He was a very persuasive guy.

MR. WOOD

Of your involvement with the Landmarks Commission, what are you most proud of having accomplished? Is there a particular episode--

MR. GOLDSTONE

Oh, I think the Grand Central case, and the acceptance of the law as a reasonable exercise of power--and the two go together. That is, that the Landmarks Commission was not going to be run by a lot of fanatics; and that it was good for values in the city.

MR. WOOD

It seems that both you and Geoffrey Platt were able to take the long view, in terms of taking it slowly, taking it step-by-step.

MR. GOLDSTONE

Well, I think we both had the same approach. Also we were terribly lucky: we were good personal friends, we were very compatible, and we had a lot of friends in common; a second thing was that we were able to dove-tail the work of the two Commissions--Landmarks and City Planning. They were just down the block, and we were in almost daily consultation. That helped an awful lot. Neither of us was fanatical; we were fairly rational people. And, you know, I miss him a great deal.

MR. WOOD

I only met him in the last years, and I enjoyed the time I spent with him--

MR. GOLDSTONE

He was a most self-effacing person, one could say. He had a passion for terseness. When, after that summer that we all worked on drafting a proposal to the Mayor--we worked very, very hard that summer--Geoffrey said, "This has got to be summarized on one page." I said it couldn't be on one page, it's a very complicated--but he boiled it down and got it through. And he was always doing that. Of course that was a joy in any government organization. Their reports are so verbose and so redundant with legalese--and he went right to the heart of a matter. A very clear, clear mind.