

LEADING THE COMMISSION:  
INTERVIEWS WITH THE FORMER CHAIRS OF NYC'S LANDMARKS PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION

The Reminiscences of  
Kent Barwick

## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kent Barwick conducted by Interviewer Liz McEnaney in 2011. This interview is part of the *Leading the Commission: Interviews with the Former Chairs of NYC's Landmarks Preservation Commission* oral history project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The views expressed in this oral history interview do not necessarily reflect the views of the New York Preservation Archive Project.

Kent Barwick, former Executive Director of the Municipal Art Society and Chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission [LPC], became involved in preservation through the efforts to save McSorley's, the Fulton Street Market, and South Street Seaport. He was appointed Chairman of the LPC by Mayor Edward Koch in 1978. He discusses Koch's very hands-off treatment of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, working with other city agencies and Deputy Mayor Robert Wagner, and navigating intricate city politics. Speaking about the effort to designate the Upper East Side Historic District, they did many studies to support their plan for the district and to avoid the "Chinese dragon maps" that had been the norm earlier in preservation history. He also speaks about interior landmarks, especially as they relate to the Broadway theaters and Radio City Music Hall.

Kent Barwick, a tireless advocate for New York preservation, served as chairman of the Landmarks Preservation Commission under Mayor Edward Koch from 1978 to 1983 and is a founder of the Preservation League of New York State. Barwick was also the executive director of the Municipal Art Society of New York from 1970-1975 and president of the MAS from 1983-1995 and 1999-2009. Known for his public work to save Grand Central Terminal, Barwick was also instrumental in efforts to preserve McSorley's, the Fulton Street Market, Radio City Music Hall, and South Street Seaport. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his work in historic preservation, including the Historic Districts Council's Landmarks Lion award in 1997 and the MAS' Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Medal in 2008.

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Interviewer: Liz McEnaney

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Q: I've been asking everyone what their background was, and how they got into preservation in the first place. You're background is ad agency. How the heck did you go from ad agency to preservation?

Barwick: Well I don't really know the answer to that. When I was in college, I took a lot of art history courses. I didn't know what my career was going to be and I still don't. I hope something comes along. I worked summers at the New York State Historical Association as a boy of all work. I picked up big shots at the airport, and I would set up chairs, show slides for lectures. I was the bartender at the cocktail parties, everything. One of my jobs was to—there was a guy who—they had something called the Seminars of American Culture which [*unclear*]. Each summer for a couple of weeks, three hundred people would come to Cooperstown and take courses, hands on courses in American art or American history courses. The discussions were fascinating stuff. A lot of very good people attached to it, famous—not famous but people like Beaumont Newhall from Eastman Kodak, Louis Jones, Eric Larrabee who was the editor of *Horizon*, Alice Winchester who was the editor of *Antiques*, so there were a lot of cool people, and historians as well.

One of my jobs was to sign up and ride on the bus for this one course, I think it was called “Reading the Rural Landscape,” given by a guy who I knew who later became head of the Strong

Museum [The Strong, National Museum of Play] in Rochester, Holden J. Swinning. I would check off your name. We'd go out on the bus across the countryside and we would stop and get off the bus and he would explain what you were seeing. Well there were lilac trees, because that was clearly as a farmstead and then you see there's locust trees there and that's clearly where there was a barn. It was kind of a course in reading the landscape and that was, I thought, a really exciting set of ideas. I got interested as a result. I mean you have a lot of different experiences growing up.

Q: Yes.

Barwick: When I was in New York, waiting to go to law school, working in the advertising business, I read in the paper that there was a project save the Fulton Market, which when I was a college kid I'd go down there. Well, there's another answer as there always are in these things. When I was in college I went to undergraduate school at Syracuse University, which is a very cold city in upstate New York—

Q: Good. You're used to this.

Barwick: This is nothing. There was a road company at the Metropolitan Opera was coming through. I think it was *La Boheme*. I had a date and we went down and stayed in line for hours to get cheap tickets. It was snowing. There was a used bookstore near the line, so after we had our tickets we went in the used bookstore and browsed. For ten cents I bought a copy of *McSorley's*

*Wonderful Saloon* and started to read it. I just couldn't stop reading it, so I was reading it in the opera.

Then at my very next opportunity, I came to New York, and started going to McSorley's with a notebook and a pen. I would sit in there—I think in those days you could have cigarettes and they certainly had beer, with the sun coming through the window, and the cats, and I started to write. One time when I was in there, somebody came in and said, "They're going to tear down the whole neighborhood and McSorley's too." I got agitated, and over on the wall was a copy of *McSorley's Wonderful Saloon*, unlike my copy, which didn't have a book jacket, it had a book jacket. There was this incredible looking guy with a snap brim hat, and one of those collars with the neck tie and there was a pin underneath, and a suit, and a vest and everything. It was the famous Joe [Joseph] Mitchell. I decided, given the significance of this news, I would call up Joe Mitchell.

In those days you could call up people. So I called the *The New Yorker* magazine. When I'm really very tired, or had nine bottles of wine, [laughter] or I'm sick, I have a slight stutter. Of course, I was very nervous. I called up and asked for Mr. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell came on and I said, "m-m-Mr. m-m-Mitchell, y-y-you don't n-n-know me but my name is Kent Barwick and I'm here at m-m-McSorley's," and he's like "w-w-well that's very n-n-nice Mr. Barwick." He had a terrible stutter [laughter]. He took an interest and agreed to meet, and went down to City Hall and testified—

Q: That's crazy.

Barwick: —against Cooper Square Alternate Urban Renewal program. On the way back in a cab, which believe me is a *[unclear]* there weren't too many cabs, he sort of gave me the history of the world as we came back uptown. Here's where NYU cheated on this *[laughter]*. He be like an informed—well, he was plenty informed—but a more interesting Christabel Gough. Nothing I'm interested about but he was really very interesting. It was quite an experience because in those days, Mayor Wagner [Robert F. Wagner, Jr.] was still in office, and the Board of Estimate, while corrupt—you had wait a long time. We must've waited two or three hours, but then you could be standing here with the board of estimate. There's the mayor of New York. He may or may not be paying too much attention, but you have this moment—Lindsay changed that. They started to let assistants sit for the board of estimate. The Lindsay years and thereafter when you went to testify, you had to testify on somebody who was twenty-five, *[laughter]* and didn't have any authority at all. That was a very interesting experience for me.

Q: What happened there testifying before the mayor?

Barwick: I'm sure I was brilliant. I had no idea—you're restricted to three minutes but we were protesting the aspect of the Cooper Square Alternate Urban Renewal. Cooper Square urban renewal was—I think—I don't know what year I'm talking about, but anyway so these—I don't know how my interest began, but the first thing I did in New York, *[unclear]* in the village, there was an effort to save Fulton Market. I knew, as part of reading *McSorley's Saloon* and other books—I'm not sure where Sloppy Louie's was written about but Joe Mitchell loved Fulton Market. He wrote about *Old Mister Flood* and *Bottom of the Harbor* and others.

I was—like generations of kids before me had gone down, two o’ clock in the morning, half drunk, with lots of friends to Fulton Market, finish the evening in these saloons as the fish market came to life. I was interested, so I called up and got Peter Stanford on the phone and I was invited to come down and be a volunteer. I remember saying I actually didn’t know a lot about things but I had worked in a museum—which was sort of dignifying my role somewhat, *[laughter]* but I had, in a variety of low-level positions. Also I’d been the—which I didn’t think anything about it at the time, but I had been the day custodian at the National Baseball Hall of Fame, which gave me some expertise in the management of people.

Q: *[Laughter]* I bet.

Barwick: Basically cleaned the restrooms and brought the souvenir bats down from the attic storeroom to sell *[laughter]*. But it was interesting because it gave me perspective on peoples’ interactions with museums, which was really a disappointing experience the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Q: What do you mean?

Barwick: People never blamed the museum; they always blamed themselves. I would often be on the front porch, having little to do with—and people would come out and say, “Oh if only the kids had been older. If only if I had been paying attention, when Ty Cobb was in the—” they were sort of disappointed but never attributed the failures to the institution.

Q: That's interesting.

Barwick: The institution is now much better. It's much more interesting—I'm not particularly interested in baseball, but it was a very interesting experience.

Anyway all of these unrelated experiences caused me to make that phone call and go down to Fulton Street, where I was assigned—there happened to be a moment—timing is everything. Their strategy at that moment was to get installed—they had a lot of people involved and they weren't getting anywhere with the city or with anyone else. They had been able to interest this group, The Municipal Art Society, in having a cocktail party at the expense of the Friends of South Street Seaport—I'm not sure what we were called then but what became Friends of South Street Seaport—in this fish stall at 16 Fulton Street. When I got down there, there were two things going on. One was to fix up the upstairs—fix up two floors. There was a ground floor space—I think it was the space the museum is today. It was—you sort of can't see much, it was just the fish store with bare brick walls. We were putting up sheet rock. My first job is to put up a piece of sheet rock on a wall that was like this. And for a million dollars I couldn't do it. It was all irregular cuts but it worked out perfectly. *[Laughter]* Sort of elevated the estimation of the people.

Q: You were legit.

Barwick: Then I somehow came to work with the guy who was curating the show, the history at the port of New York for the ground floor space—I can't think of his name—which is fascinating because we didn't have any money, so we were getting prints out of the Public library, pasting them on cardboard and putting them in the hall.

Q: So that was kind of the founding of the museum then?

Barwick: That was sort of the first public aspect. I don't know why we're into all this, this is further to—but all these other intersections of things, you asked me that.

The great day came—I remember I was painting the floor of the men's rom. Bill Shops, *[phonetic] [unclear]* very old, and probably likely to die soon, but self-important preservation architect. I remember later when I was working at the commission, he would always work for terrible clients because they would hire him as the architectural expert to defeat something. You couldn't possibly designate *[unclear]*, *[laughter]*. But he had to use the men's room so I had to leave while he used the facilities. Anyway, the great day came when the Municipal Art Society came and drank everything and ate everything and left. They were all people from the Upper East Side. There was no effect *[laughter]*.

Out of that I began to meet people. I started putting in probably twenty or thirty hours a week, after work, Saturdays and Sundays, doing whatever needed to be done, which ranged foundation proposals, to putting up sheet rock, to doing an exhibition. I became—I was lucky I survived this—the head of the public education department. We would invite very famous people to come

and lecture at the space in 16 Fulton Street. I would take the lecturer and a couple of other— Peter Sanford, [unclear] we would all go out to dinner at something like Sloppy Louie's, let's say, at six and the lecture was going to be at seven. You never knew whether there'd be a single person present or their or two. I just didn't have the nerves for it; I couldn't eat I was so upset. But there was some rather—I remember Professor Robert [G.] Albion wrote a great book about—he taught at Harvard—the rise of the Port of New York, [*The Rise of New York Port 1850-1860*] which is still a great classic economic analysis. Did it all by looking at the bills of lading from ships and counting houses and whatnot.

Q: Wow.

Barwick: Anyway, out of all this I began to know people who were active in the Seaport. Two of them were Mary Black, whose the curator of the New York Historical [Society]. She had been head of the [unclear]. And Joan Davidson who was the daughter of the founder—the guy who headed the Kaplan fund who several times during this period of time tried to rescued the seaport and I was president one of them, where we needed \$25,000 to do something—he was a little guy. “You're doing everything wrong!” And then he would—if it wasn't—send the letter in triplicate, in five months he would give you the check.

Q: That's awesome. I wish it were like that.

Barwick: Very involved in philanthropy. One day Mary and Joan turned out to be on the board of the Municipal Art Society and they said, “You know the Municipal Art Society is 175 years old

and never had a full time staff. They want to have an executive director. Would you be interested in applying?" I said, Oh, I don't know. I was interviewed by Bronson. You know Bronson. Bronson was on the committee, Paul Byard Bronson and Charlie [Charles Evans] Hughes [III]. I couldn't possibly, I had two little children at that point and I wasn't earning very much money, but this was something like \$15,000 a year less than I was earning, and I might have been earning \$60,000. I couldn't do it.

They came back about eight months later and they'd had a successful fundraising campaign. Charlie Hughes—he's a wonderful man who should be in the archive. Charles Evans Hughes the III. He was the grandson of the chief justice, his father was the founder of Hughes Hubbard Reed, and he was a great disappointment to his family because he became an architect. A very talented architect but very self-effacing. He is the one who did the design for the Manufacturer's Hanover Trust building [Manufacturers Trust Company Building] on Forty-Third Street. He was a young kid at Skidmore that had an in-office design and he won. For—what's his name, *[taps on table]* the world famous head of—

Q: [Gordon] Bunshaft?

Barwick: No, was it? Yes, I guess Bunshaft took credit for it. He didn't actually take credit—he took credit, but grudgingly Charlie was given credit. That was all Charlie. He was an extremely ineffective presenter, but trustworthy. I remember one time in Harlem—there was a big fight at the local board and they ask him to count the ballots. He was such a—out of this, I went to work for the Municipal Art Society. Timing was—the sort of thing they'd been interested in for years

was beginning to interest the broader public. The public was—I hadn't thought about this, but it's an era when everything was changing; the protest against the war, the protest against forcible rights, both of which I had been involved in as a protestor. I had been to Washington, marching. I was lucky I was there to hear Martin Luther King's speech.

Q: You were?

Barwick: Oh yeah, it was wonderful. At some distance; I was up in one of those trees at the edge of the lawn. It was very moving. That was all a different subject someday—a very moving experience including getting down there.

I think there was a real burst of citizen activism that was going on, and that was true in The Seaport too. The Seaport had Peter Stanford, who had a wonderful gift, inspired people. The Seaport had thousands of members who only paid a dollar or five dollars, but there were more members than the major museums because he'd sign them up. "Oh Liz, you've got to join. Sign here, it's just a dollar, or five dollars." They had that power and they used that power. The MAS [Municipal Art Society], which had been very much an insider game where, over the years of existence it had—Joan had enough prestige or personal connection to people of power so that they could get an appointment with the Mayor—what they would do, is they would sit around in there, write a letter to the mayor, "Dear Mayor [Vincent R.] Impellitteri." It was a different world and sometimes—often those letters were ignored but sometimes—they felt that if had staff they might do more. So my job was to do more. I said, "Don't worry about the money, we'll take care of that."

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: That's why we're talking about Charlie, Charlie Hughes had gone up to Riverdale, gone to dancing class with David Rockefeller and then he'd gone to Harvard with Phillip Johnson. They were in the same class in architecture school. So Charlie went out and got \$5,000 from—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: —each of those worthies. That's why they felt they could offer me the job. The money didn't last very long *[laughter]*.

Did you go to school with Paul Buyer?

Q: Yes, I went to school with Buyer.

Barwick: Buyer was sort of the secretary of the MAS—

Q: His jacket was always perfectly perched. I always wondered whether it was velcroed.

Barwick: Very fond of him. At some point, I think I went to work, March first or something or June fifteenth, and Paul said doesn't look like it's going to work financially *[laughter]*.

Q: Two weeks later.

Barwick: It wasn't two weeks but it wasn't long. The idea that they would take care of the money, was a ridiculous idea anyway on my part to believe it, but I didn't have any experience. I never *[unclear]* but I got slightly better. Anyway, that's the—so I became immersed more officially than I had been in subjects that I'd already been doing, working to save the buildings in The Seaport. We were working to bring back the ships, to restore them. Robert Duvall *[phonetic]* was trying to create a lively market that wasn't just food and other things. I was very lucky to be given the job, first of several jobs I was lucky to get, for which I was completely unqualified. I was very proud of my experience of being offered the job.

It was only when we moved from, I think it was when we moved from 41 East Sixty-Fifth we had space about this size to go to Rockefeller Center, and then from Rockefeller Center to the Urban Center. One of those moves, somebody found the files from the job search. There had been two other candidates. One was—I'm sure this wants to be in a history book—a decorator friend of one of the *grand dames*, and the other was a military man who had a great record but seemed to have a drinking problem *[laughter]*.

Q: Stiff competition.

Barwick: The fact that I was the leading candidate was a lot less significant than I had thought. They were a wonderful group of people I worked for at MAS. I remember the first meeting, I

was called in—I was on the board table like this. I didn't know who most of them were. I knew Mary and John. You didn't know Mary because she had died probably at the time she was fabulous person.

Q: But I always see that book—

Barwick: You know Mike Gladstone.

Q: Yes.

Barwick: Well Mike and Mary had both been married to other people before and had children with other people. I'm not sure what their legal relationship was, but they became a couple.

Q: Oh wow.

Barwick: For years.

Q: Her book—is it the catalogue of the New York Society? There's the one book that was part of my intro to—part of my premier to New York was the book she did for the Historical Society, one of them.

Barwick: She was an art historian. Her interest was American folk art. But she was also—

Q: Didn't she do one about the Seaport?

Barwick: I don't know about that. She and Mike gave me—and I still have it on the wall of my home office—a wonderful old photographs, two of the seaport. One of kids swimming off the Fulton Market, and the other one o the elevated train coming through.

Q: That's cool.

Barwick: Where were we going with—? Oh this meeting. It was very much the board. There really wasn't a staff; they had one fabulous woman. Over the years they had one woman who was sort of part time, who arranged for the cucumber sandwiches, typed out the final letter that was going to go to Mayor LaGuardia or *[unclear]*, whatever. At the time, she was a woman named Barbara Messing who was running thirty theater companies out of the office. She loved theater. She also believed in astrology and when you called the historical society *[unclear]* she said “What's your sign?”

Q: No, she didn't.

Barwick: She would seat the board astrologically. They never knew they were being—

Q: No she didn't! *[Laughs]*

Barwick: Fabulous person. I haven't seen her in forty years. Here were all these people and I was given a real welcome, and they gave me my first assignment which was to—someone wants to build a police stable in the middle of Central Park, a big underground facility. “We really oppose this, we want you to stop this project,” in effect.

Q: Yes,

Barwick: Well I didn't know about eighty percent of the people in the room. I did know who one of them was; it was the architect of that project, Norval White, who's sitting with the chair—I guess Charlie was probably chairing, and about two around was Norval. It made a big impression on me, and that was the culture of the MAS. Today they don't oppose anything so it'll be lost, with other aspects, but they didn't hesitate to oppose projects of their own trustees. The good manners of the trustees—I think Norval in a way respected it. Over and over again Hughes' projects were opposed. That was a unique likable feature of—

Q: Did Norval chime in when this opposition was happening?

Barwick: No he didn't. I had just started a newsletter. We were trying to get things going a little and so the newsletter was pretty amateur. The first edition of the newsletter—I guess somebody maybe Byard sent me when he was sick—was a side by side column of two opposing views on this police stable. I was writing opposing it and the other person supporting it was David [F.M.] Todd *[laughter]*.

Q: Interesting, interesting.

Barwick: A fabulous guy, but not an immediate preservationist. Anyway, that's the closet I could come to, why did you get interested in this stuff.

Q: This is great. It's an amazing story. This makes me think the movie needs to happen at some point, your movie.

Barwick: Who do you think? Daniel Day Lewis? *[Laughter]*

Q: You're not Abe Lincoln enough.

Barwick: There is a movie about Joe Mitchell and for some reason—oh, last week in Florida June and I went to rent some DVDs, and after having tried one night to watch, *Trainspotting*. Did you ever—?

Q: Yes I saw that when it came to the theater, but I couldn't understand it.

Barwick: Exactly. The movie was practically over, just at the end of the movie—June by this point had fallen asleep—I think I was able to understand much of what they were saying. I remember I had seen that somebody did a movie about Joe Mitchell. I'm not sure but the guy who plays him—if somebody did a movie about you—whoever played it, that doesn't look like this. What's the nonsense with that?

Q: I just reread Joe Mitchell's the Joe Flood story.

Barwick: *Old Mr. Flood?*

Q: *Old Mr. Flood.* I don't even know if I read it before. I had always thought that I did, but he's from Norwood Massachusetts, which is where my mother's from. So I got such a kick out of that.

Barwick: Old Mr. Flood was?

Q: Yes, old Mr. Flood. There's a point where he goes back to this small New England town to visit his family and I thought it was such a strange connection.

Barwick: Joe was himself often out of town. He'd go home to North Carolina every year to help his father bring in whatever their crop was and supervise the slaves or something. It's kind of a— still very much a city of people who were from somewhere else.

Q: Yes, I think that's what makes it great.

Barwick: All this is thirty-five years before I worked for the Landmarks Commission [New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission] [*laughs*].

Q: I know, I'm starting to jump to Landmarks. At what point kind of working for MAS did you have your first run in, or what was your first experience with the Landmark's Commission? When did you figure out what this commission was all about?

Barwick: Well, the MAS—in that case me because I was the staff—the first growth of the staff was one full time. I was the first director that actually came to the office. I might've been the first director ever. I'm not sure. Anyway, we would prepare testimony, then go to City Hall and deliver it. Sometimes the testimony was good because there were good architectural historians who had helped prepare it. The MAS was very close to the Landmark's Commission; Harmon Goldstone, who had been the president of the society was the chair, Alan Burnham, who had been the head of society's committee work with the SAH [Society of Architectural Historians], on the original list of people, was the executive director.

It was close and we were—so I would go down and spend half a day testifying. Sometimes the testimony was good, that is it had been worked on by people knew something. Sometimes it was less good because it had been hastily put together *[laughs]* by people who didn't know anything. Harmon Goldstone said. "That's very helpful. Thank you Mr. Barwick, that's very helpful." It was only years later—I don't know what he thought then, but we had a falling out, over the Landmarks Law [New York City Landmarks Preservation Law], which we were trying to amend, which totally didn't work out. It was a positive relationship and then one day, Harmon Goldstone came to my office and—I'm confusing these two things, Harmon Goldstone didn't come to my office very often. But in two visits—and I'm not sure which two apply; I have to think about the timing of all this. It really doesn't matter. In one of these meetings he—I think in

one meeting, he let me know that the Grand Central case was going to be decided and that it was going to be decided—

Q: The case was decided in '78 but then you were chair in '78.

Barwick: Yes, but the case was argued—it's a fact and I can't—but I'm going to say it was argued in '66—

Q: We'll totally fill in the blank for this.

Barwick: It was so long ago that nobody can remember that it was such a case. Harmon—I don't remember exactly what he said, but I think he said he thought that the case would be coming down soon. I don't think he—

Q: So everyone had kind of, not forgot about it, but out of—

Barwick: Well, at this moment—we can tie all these things together because the MAS at that point had—we were doing a project with the National Endowment for the Arts grant, with City Planning when John [E.] Zucotti was the chair. The project was to do a land use plan for Second Avenue. Second Avenue subway was going to go in, and it was a chance to get integrated, transit-oriented development, so we had more Rockefeller centers and less holes in the sidewalk. At MAS, the city planning commission on the MAS had these meetings with community groups

and the MTA, and the world; the city planning commission. Huge—and so we did a lot of work with them.

One time I was down at the city planning commission on a Saturday working on Second Avenue, I said to somebody at the law office there, I said, “I hear that the Grand Central case is going to be decided soon, I bet you have a file on it.” The guy said, “Sure.” He brought me a file like this, *[thumps on table]*. I opened the file up and right at the top was this memo. So to place this, this is at the very end of the [John V.] Lindsay administration. A new mayor had been elected but he was not installed. Mayor Abraham [D.] Beame. The memo at the top was for Bernie [W. Bernard] Richland.

Q: Who is that?

Barwick: Bernie Richland is the person who is going to become the corporation council.

Q: Oh, okay.

Barwick: But he isn't yet.

Q: Under Beame?

Barwick: Under Beame. This is, this time of year, after the election, before the inauguration, and the swearing in of the new mayor and the new administration. The memo says: to Abraham

Beame, Mayor-Elect, from Berine Richland, presumed corporation council, corporation council in waiting or something. He said that he met with the judge, and the railroad, and the judge was going to find against the city on all counts. The case was going to be decided in favor of UGP Properties and Penn Central. The railroad had offered to forget their case for damages, millions of dollars' worth of damages, if the city would agree not to appeal. I'm recommending that we not appeal.

Q: Whoa.

Barwick: And then a few days later we announced the campaign of the Citizens Committee to Save Grand Central Terminal. The whole point was to embarrass Abraham Beame into taking the appeal.

Q: So had you not seen that memo you wouldn't have started the campaign.

Barwick: That's correct.

Q: Wow.

Barwick: I told Sam Roberts that story—

Q: That was maybe about '75? Is that—? we can check the date but I'm just wondering.

Barwick: It was before that, because I was chair of Landmark's Commission from '78—

Q: '78 to '83?

Barwick: Well, I was appointed by [Edward I.] Koch, who came in after Beame—this is just when Beame was coming in. This was the first of many cases—this was the lower court. Justice [Irving H.] Saypol was in the so called Supreme Court in New York. Then it was argued and went to the Court of Appeals and finally the Supreme Court. So it got to the Supreme Court when I was chairman, but it came back to life during this period of time at the end of—

Q: Wow, timing is everything, seeing that memo.

Barwick: We were lucky because the papers covered it and that's what caused Jackie [Jacqueline Kennedy] Onassis to call up and say she wanted to help. Which then caused us to have the guts to have a press conference at the Oyster Bar.

Q: I love this.

Barwick: One of the aspects of the press conference was that—there's a table like this at the Oyster Bar, we're all seated, and we can't hear anything. I was sitting next to Jackie because I had the notes. I was staff. I got up to go over and do something and when I was out of my seat Congressman Koch took my seat. I thought for a minute, "Hey buddy [*laughter*]," but I didn't. I think I would've sealed—I think I would not have been the chairman [*unclear*] because I'll tell

you, later when I did become chairman, I was being interviewed. Something else happened that made me realize that Mayor Elect, and later the Mayor Koch, had a long memory. He would not forget anything.

Q: So had you given him the boot, your fate would've been sealed [*laughter*].

Barwick: Yes. The other visit from Harmon, related to his desire to have a section of the Landmarks Law, to have the Landmarks Law explicitly cover interiors. He asked if we wouldn't work on that, and get a group of citizens together to work on it. This was clearly earlier because this relates to the New York—they just got through the threads of the theaters—so yes. But so we had committee. There were other things going on and two of them—there were three other things going on. Certainly the Wall Street Journal was arguably dead, but [*unclear*] specifically have this capacity.

But other things were going on in the run up to this. One of which was the—all these violations of Central Park and particularly Prospect Park. It turned out, because there was no zoning in the park, it was pretty much what the parks commissioner wanted to do, and arts commissioner wanted. Early in the time when I was working for the MAS, there was the Sixty-Third street subway was going through, there was supposed to be an underground police station, a riding ring that I spoke about. There was an underground fire or something. Just before I had come, there had been the Huntington Hartford Café and that was still officially on the table. So the MAS was very agitated about all these intrusions into parks. I had put together, and the staff, put together a

thing called the Green Ribbon Committee or something. The whole idea was to come up with some additional protections for park land. We wanted some sort of city planning or zoning thing.

The other thing that sort of came out of MAS, came out of my mind, I believe related to the aforementioned Holden Swinney, reading the landscapes of 1956, was the idea that landscape architecture was in fact an art, and that there were design relationships, and there should be a category of designations called scenic landmarks. The Green Ribbon Committee wanted that. The MAS had a much smaller world in those days. The former vice president of MAS, August Hecksher, was the Commissioner of Parks when the Metropolitan Museum [of Art] was going to expand into Central Park. August Hecksher had, as required, submitted the plans for the Metropolitan Museum to the Landmarks Commission because the Metropolitan Museum was a landmark—Central Park certainly wasn't a landmark then, but the Metropolitan museum was. He had never released the report.

Q: He had never released the report for the Met additions?

Barwick: For the Landmark's Commissions. [*Unclear*], which it shouldn't be done that way, just put it in the bottom of the drawer.

The second thing that the MAS wanted was to require that these reports be public.

Q: Even for city agencies—?

Barwick: It's a public act on a public piece of property. It's not binding, as you know, on anybody but at least they should be public. The third thing we wanted, in addition to interior scenic landmarks and making these things public, we wanted rid of the moratorium on hearings that the Landmark's Commission had. Harmon—

Q: Can you just explain that for the—?

Barwick: Yes. I think I can. I believe it's part of the original compromise reached in the establishment of the Landmarks Law following the demolition of Penn Station and the Brokaw Houses. There was a landmarks law written and proposed, and in the give and take of City Council, the Real Estate Board, the interests of the real estate community were—they were all afraid the Landmark's Commission would be riding roughshod over property rights, so they wanted to severely limit the ability of the Landmark's Commission to step into issues. As I remember—with the fact check—there was a period of six months every thirty-six months that the Landmark's Commission is allowed to have hearings on and designate significant structures. This had led very often to significant buildings being threatened, communities getting themselves all worked up, going to the Landmark's Commission, and the Landmark's Commission saying, "We're terribly sorry. We really feel for you, but there's nothing we could do."

In this period of time we were working officially with Harmon's invitation, but on a broader assignment than he wanted or liked. We're broadening it now to these four things, and this young

whippersnapper reporter comes along from *The [New York] Post*, Roberta Gratz, having just done a series on the nursing home scandal and she's looking for a new scandal.

By now there are plenty of people out there who were willing to complain in the communities about Landmarks Commission. A lot of people were like, well I kind of like it that way. The sum, it's not a discussion to be lightly dismissed. Harmon Goldstone and his compatriots, Geoffrey Platt and others, who have worked to secure this legislation, in a city that seemed to be intent on tearing everything down, were very concerned about its legality, very concerned with it being tested and overturned in the courts. It was very courageous of them, for instance, to stand up for Grand Central. They were offered all kinds of reasons—world famous architect Marcel Breuer's going to do it, it's going to be brilliant, arguments had been made all the time. They stood up. They were very courageous and drew the line and said no, we can't approve this. I think they were very worried about the whole construction—the dynamic at the time was, they were the wise old men who'd gotten this provision, which they wanted to protect, for things of real significance and all these whippersnappers were—

Q: Wanting more.

Barwick: Biting their heels and wanting more, and not being very thoughtful about it, and willing to throw the whole thing into jeopardy.

Q: That whole kind of mother hen thing, protecting the landmark—

Barwick: I think that was very much their strategy, which they discussed. You've read Harmon's book?

Q: Yes

Barwick: To avoid litigation. They felt it wasn't absolutely necessary [*unclear*] which comes up later, we're not sure, we'll avoid this problem, we'll roll it over. They were rolling over a lot of problems, but by the time Roberta Gratz was doing her newspaper series, some of them were weeded out, we want this revision to move on. He was pissed, Harmon. Roberta was going out and getting quotes from people. I'm sure Bronson was one of them, but people from Brooklyn Heights and elsewhere who were annoyed. The interesting question to ask Otis—well first of all, I don't remember the series, haven't read it in years. There were five stories maybe over the course of a week. Other people were perfectly willing to give Roberta everything she wanted, but none of them would be attributed. I was the only one, I was trying to be very diplomatic, I thought, in balancing what I was saying, but I was the only one that was ever quoted. So Harmon was absolutely sure, went to his deathbed believing I had done this.

Q: When it was about a whole community—

Barwick: That I created the series and undermined him and undermined the law. I think he may have thought—and it wouldn't have been bad—that he was above politics and chairman for life and he learned on the way to work one morning on the subway—

Q: Post the Roberta Gratz—

Barwick: —that Beverly Moss Spatt had been appointed to this presumably life-time post  
*[laughter]*.

Q: That couldn't have gone over well.

Barwick: I think he was not happy about Mr. Barwick. I did not instigate, but as it worked out we got the law passed that we wanted with Barbaralee's [Diamonstein-Spielvogel] help, other people's help. Whitney [North] Seymour [Sr.] was sort of the chairman, Tony as usual did all the work,

Q: This was the '73 amendment?

Barwick: How can that be? The amendments were finished off in the Lindsay administration. But Koch was elected in '77. The timing is not working.

Q: We'll check all these.

Barwick: The timeline of all these things doesn't—but never mind the facts *[laughter]*.

There was a big struggle to get the landmarks law changed. Well, wait a minute, I wasn't the landmarks chairman then. That's the confusion—

Q: You were MAS.

Barwick: —I'm at MAS then, in 1973 or whenever it was.

Q: We'll confirm.

Barwick: You should interview Barbaralee about how she got The Mayor's office to support it, because Harmon didn't want to support it.

Q: That would be a good one. I don't know if Tony has interviewed Barbaralee, or if anyone from the [New York Preservation] Archive Project—*[crosstalk]* no he didn't do any but if he pushed it forward.

Barwick: I think it's good to interview all the chairmen because each of them invented the world, but there are these significant events, like the period when they decided to stand up for Grand Central with almost no witnesses left. Then there was the litigation and that thing which I think you get some from me, but there are a lot of other people you should interview, in the revision of the laws and other. You want to get these, somebody wants them. You're not the deciding, but maybe you're influencing these things?

Q: No, I think Barbaralee would be great. I've never met her.

Barwick: You've never met Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel?

Q: I've never talked to her directly. I've been in the same room as her, but I've never talked to her.

Barwick: She's a very good journalist herself. Her skill is interviewing. In fact I've been on these *[unclear]* panels to discuss an important subject and—however long a panel is, an hour and a half or an hour and twenty minutes—and She uses about ten minutes for each person to introduce them. It's like the whole history of the world, and then there's about six minutes left for the discussion *[laughter]*.

Q: I saw you on one of the shows. Now it was a while ago but it's on YouTube.

Barwick: YouTube?

Q: YouTube, you can find it.

Barwick: I think I seen one—is it with Hugh Hardy and Jonathan Barnett? I forgot who else was on it. We're all looking twelve. Anyway, that's the story, the relations with the Landmark's Commission changed, from the best friends and allies to being one of the thorns in your side.

Q: From MAS being a thorn in your side.

Barwick: Well because I was the mouthpiece.

Q: So you become a thorn in their side and then Koch decides he wants you on the commission, to chair the commission?

Barwick: Yes, well actually he doesn't decide. He wins the election and he has a committee of people who are choosing the people. Meanwhile Beverly views herself, as Harmon did, as— Beverly—you interviewed her?

Q: I've interviewed her.

Barwick: Well you know that Beverly did a lot to bring the Landmark's Commission into the twentieth century. She did all these things for community development, funded façade improvement programs, to community development funded surveys of communities, and she did a lot to really take the Landmark's Commission out of the way it had been designed by the MAS and the Society of Architectural Historians over lunch at the Century one day. She was the anti-WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestants], anti- we're all connected, everything. When Koch got elected, the first thing Beverly did was to produce a document that was more or less the size of the Manhattan telephone directory, outlining for the new mayor all the things that's she had invented, and she over did it of course. But then Koch then appointed a committee composed of Harmon Goldstone, Eleanor Clark French and one other person. I think it was Geoffrey Platt. It was some other pre-world person to read these reports. They came back and said this is exactly

what we feared, this is the wrong direction. I never knew this but only later Koch said whatever happened to your crazy predecessor.

Beverly had—Beverly's very smart and when I'd been in this role at MAS, we also testified regularly in front of the Planning Commission. She was the planning commissioner who was always the dissenter. She drove Don [Donald H.] Elliott who was the chair *[unclear]* nuts and they were always trying to get rid of her and I was, with this terrible guy named Roger Starr who represented the Citizens Housing and Climate Commission and later was on the editorial board at the Times. Extremely rightwing guy, he's the one who invented planned shrinkage for New York, just close the Bronx and put up some gates. *[laughter]* He later became an archenemy of mine, but he and I joined up to try to save Beverly.

Q: To save her on the Planning Commission?

Barwick: On the Planning Commission. And to force Lindsay would reappoint her. I think she was reappointed.

Q: How come you wanted her—?

Barwick: She was intelligent, she was a voice. She would frequently be the dissenter on things we were doing that were crazy. I remember—I'm not sure she dissented on this but in general she was the one that would listen to what— she's overactive perhaps but brilliant in her way. But it's funny how everyone was mad at everyone else. Harmon was so sure I *[laughter]*. Beverly

was sure that she had been done in by the MAS and the Landmarks Conservancy which was not actually true. Harmon had honorary position on the MAS board. I don't think he ever attended anything he was so pissed off at me—

Q: You weren't his favorite person. *[crosstalk]*

Barwick: Beverly was sure that she'd been undermined, by the very forces—it was too bad, she actually did do a lot of really great things, all of which, we kept going. We did not take the advice of Eleanor Clark French and Harmon Goldstone.

Q: You took Beverly's book and went for it on it.

Barwick: She's funny, she wouldn't give back the car. The commissioner had the car, she wouldn't give it back.

Q: *[laughter]* Because she was still then on the commission.

Barwick: Yes, she was on the commission. She wouldn't give up her seat either. So Barbaralee gave up her seat so I could get on.

Q: Oh I didn't realize that. How did they determine that? They decided they wanted to appoint you—the Koch administration decided—

Barwick: You can't—the chair is appointed from amongst the commissioners. So you can't just appoint the chair and drop them on top, there has to be a vacancy. Beverly didn't want to give up her chair or her car. I still remember my first meeting—this was the middle of a big crisis. I was sworn in at night by the clerk, David Dickens, *[phonetic]* Clerk of the City, about two or three days, maybe just the night before, I can't remember, this big hearing at Radio City Music Hall. The hearing was set for, let's say ten, at City Hall, the Board of Estimate chamber and I was going to meet the commissioners for the first time. We set up a coffee hour, so I would meet the commissioners at nine and then we'd have the hearing at ten.

Beverly had decided at some point—well she said during the coffee hour at nine “The landmarks law as it applies to interiors is unconstitutional on its face.” She always talks like a reading legal decision, she probably had a good command of it and so she could talk you into—Al [Alton G.] Marshall, the guy who was head of Rockefeller Center for the Rockefellers, who's one of the many people who claimed to have written landmarks law back in the '60s. While I was meeting the commissioners and people were filing in, she then went out and—you know there are these place cards that say commissioner X and commissioner Y. She changed them all around *[laughter]*.

Q: This is too good to be true, Kent. So you all walk out there and there's just like —

Barwick: The chairman was still in the middle because that's where the microphone was, where Mary *[phonetic]* used to sit, but she changed her place. But she didn't hesitate for a second to make all these speeches during the hearings about how unconstitutional the law was.

Q: So she's on the commission talking at the public hearing, aloud on the record about the law being unconstitutional.

Barwick: We better check that fact.

Q: Yes, we'll fact check that and strike it.

Barwick: She didn't hide from the commissioners at the coffee hour. Or later, rather she said it at the hearing, I just don't know. She's not an evil person at all. She's injured by this, by losing this job and if you live by the sword you die by the sword.

Q: I guess so.

Barwick: Well that is politics. The commission, the hope was that it was above politics, since the job wasn't paying anything, only the chairman gets paid. At that time, it was a part time salary, a very low salary, as opposed to other commissioners. It wasn't seen as a big political plum to have such a job. Perhaps it's changed. I don't know. What question was I answering?

Q: Well we were on just your appointment to the commission in general. So someone from Koch's office or from the administration—

Barwick: No, on the contrary, there was a transition committee. There were a number of people I knew on the transition committee and had worked with. One of them was Doris [Chanin] Freedman, who was a big supporter of Koch's in the '77 election. Koch ran once before and lost. I actually semi-worked on that campaign. subway stops and things, [unclear] There was this big task force of people and it was decided that I might be a candidate for two jobs; one was the Landmark's Commission, one was the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. The day came when –I was a finalist, I'd met with the committee a number of times, and of course by then, I had a fair knowledge of Landmark's Commission and a fair knowledge also of arts policies. I worked for the State Council of the Arts at that point. I could get through a cocktail party conversation on both subjects. *[laughter]*

I was ushered into —the Mayor Elect had a tiny office in the bottom of the Rune building *[phonetic]* on Lexington Avenue, no windows. I was ushered in by Ken, a guy I knew, Ken Holcrumb *[phonetic]* who was a friend of mine. He was an architect who worked for the city in the office of midtown planning. He was a good friend of Ed Koch's. First his partner died must have been AIDS and then he died, but in this period he was a good guy. I liked him a lot. In any case, I was ushered in the room, left alone with Ed and without smiling Ed says “Do you still have the dog?” And I remembered then, that when Peter Barwick who was fort or something, was a little baby, we got a puppy, a labrador retriever puppy, and living at 17 East Ninth Street just off the corner of university, between University and Fifth. It was a sunny day like this, one day I was out. I was on the sidewalk and the district leader came by, in I guess what was a new blue suit, and the dog jumped up on the fancy blue suit. *[laughter]* Years later, years later, Peter

must have been born about '65, what year are we 2012? So he'd be forty-five in 2000 and—I don't know I think forty in 2005 so he'd be forty—

Q: Yes forty-seven.

Barwick: Maybe I did something wrong, you should know your child's birthdays. I know the day I just don't know the year. I think it was '65 or something like that. Ed —was the first thing he had to say. He's not the friendliest interview in the world, but I assured him the dog had been killed, *[laughter]* we'd just put him down.

Q: That was it, that one mistake. *[laughter]*

Barwick: It's not like—I'd done a lot of work with Ed Koch in between. We were both very interested in mass *[unclear]* congress, mass transit, and one time we were on this panel together. He was a speaker sometimes at MAS meetings. And then—these fulsome introductions. It wasn't as if he hadn't seen me since that day, but it was on his mind.

Q: He made the point of reminding you.

Barwick: Well he had his own issues with the MAS. And he—This is way off the subject.

Q: It's all about landmarks. It's all about preservation.

Barwick: Well Koch, you know, really was a reform leader, district leader, across party lines, to support John Lindsay as a reform candidate, which was a courageous thing to do. Others had pushed Carmine DeSapio out of leadership, the village machine, the village independent democrats, which was a new left, liberal, intelligent. When Koch decided to run for state senate he went to Lindsay, to ask for Lindsay to endorse him. Lindsay didn't endorse Ed. He endorsed Whitney North Seymour, Jr. because of his friendship with Whitney North Seymour Sr.—

Q: Interesting.

Barwick: —On the Republican side of the world. Ed always felt that the Upper East Side—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I think Ed was furious.

Q: At this betrayal.

Barwick: Whitney North Seymour Sr. was kind of a—he was a very strong—the only person I could think of who comes close to the status that he enjoyed is Otis [Pratt Pearsall], and Otis is strictly in historic preservation. Whitney is much bigger public figure, with the American Bar, and his son—he had been president of the MAS for a long time. Mike had been president of the MAS—he's president of the MAS now, now being a period of time—he resigned as president of MAS to be state senator.

Q: Oh he was president at that time.

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I remember because our mutual friend Joan. When Joan was head of the State Council of the Arts. She really did a great job but she was not as politic as she might be. She ended up annoying certain people for the wrong reasons—she was right and they were wrong.

Q: What happened? Is that a really long story?

Barwick: One thing was—

Q: We'll totally strike all that—

Barwick: One thing, a guy named Howard [M.] Squadron, whose the father of Daniel [L.] Squadron. Daniel Squadron was an Assemblyman from downtown. Howard was a representative. Howard was the leader of whatever branch of New York Jewish society—very Zionist —He had a lock on that. He was a lawyer and he represented all the dance companies and he was the lawyer to the State Council of the Arts, which was writing all these checks to these dance companies.

Joan wanted there to be an independent lawyer, but instead of—you know what she's like when she gets cornered, she sometimes isn't at her best—Howard wasn't going to give up this cushy job easily. Then it all got to be defined somehow as Joan wanted her own lawyer. [*Crosstalk*] at that time. Anyway there were a series of things that Joan did that were—Joan mistook Hugh [Leo] Carey for FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt].

Q: Oh interesting, that's really interesting.

Barwick: She thought, I remember, she thought when the Republicans were out, the New Deal was coming back and all these wonderful things were going to happen. She'd been asked to take the job by Mayor Wagner and Hugh Carey, not—she had run against Roy [M.] Goodman.

Q: On the Upper East Side.

Barwick: Spent a lot of her own money, raising her own money, got closer than anybody else to beating Roy Goodman. I think it was just a party payback from their point of view.

Q: Got it.

Barwick: From her point of view, it's the dawn of a new renaissance. Hugh Carey I think did not do well with his dealings with women—it was probably just generational. I remember one time she went up there, she'd made an appointment to see him—she had a zillion good ideas. She had a lot of good ideas about how to make the council work better, how to make it more accountable

and all of which were disturbing to people in the arts, and people like Howard Squadron were continually spinning it as politicizing the arts when in fact she was de-politicizing the inside baseball.

She went up, one time to Albany, and governor's secretary said "You know, he's in a foul mood, I don't really think, if I were you I wouldn't." And she, "What do you mean? I've come all this way. I'm going in." So she's there and he's not paying any attention to her, "Governor I've come all this way" and he was furious with her. Even so it was all inside. But then there was a strike by the musicians on Broadway. The strike was extremely injurious to the—the theaters had to close, and when the theaters had to close, the restaurants more or less closed, nobody took taxis cabs—

Q: A mini economic disaster.

Barwick: A tsunami. There was a guy on the council who was head of the Max [phonetic] something or other, amalgamated musicians. They had a union.

Q: And he was a board member of the council?

Barwick: He was a board member of the council, but I can tell you this council, which had by now become somewhat contentious over these issues because they're a group of people like—

Q: People had sided one way or the other, for kind of old guard versus new guard—

Barwick: People had mostly sided against Joan because she was being portrayed as the politicizer of the council that was above politics. A lot of people I know believed that, old bosses of mine who had been on the council like Louie [Louis C.] Jones and Eric Larabee. Also to make way for Joan, Eric Larabee who many people admired, including me, had been given the Harmon treatment and the Beverly Moss Spatt treatment.

Q: He gave up the car *[laughter]*.

Barwick: Max Errands [phonetic] I think his name was. I'll get that right for you. But the thing about it, as a member, he always voted the party line. If Joan had decided we're going to paint all of Rochester pink, he would've been the first vote for it. He was no trouble at all. He was a sweetheart. I mean he knew he'd been appointed by the governor, this was the governor's appointment, he'd do what the governor appointment wanted. You and I might not admire his cynics. Then Joan sends the top staff—there might be six or seven of us—a memo. Well geez, do you think it was sort of wrong to have—a person like Max on the council at the very moment when the *[unclear]* was? That was the end, somebody on staff who didn't like what Joan was doing, leaked it to the press *[laughter]*.

Q: Although I have to say it sounds like she's right, absolutely right.

Barwick: There was nothing that she did—including the lawyer thing

Q: Yes

Barwick: —She had—later when she was the commissioner of parks. She figured all this out.

Q: Oh like how to control the spin on PR and everything else?

Barwick: We were both pretty naïve and it was good for me so I can go through this terrible experience. First she got fired, then I got fired. When I got to Landmark's Commission, we had no illusions about—

Barwick: Yes that's a really good point, Kent.

Barwick: —State Council of the Arts, *[unclear]* I had two secretaries. One of them was a regular secretary and the other was an appointment secretary—we'd meet at a table like this each Tuesday. There'd be hundreds of invitations and we'd decide which ones could or couldn't do. We couldn't do more than one or two—

Q: —Oh invitations just to which events you were going to?

Barwick: Oh no when I went to the opera, I sat with Senator Javits [Jacob Javits] in the chairman's box. You were invited everywhere because you were writing checks for \$30 million. It never occurred to me that was the reason, because I thought was smart and good humored. If I told a joke, *[bang on table]* if I had an idea—oh what a good idea.

Q: *[Laughter]* I agree a hundred percent.

Barwick: I still remember [unclear] came home with me, after Joan had been cruelly treated, defenestrated, the governor's office would leak that she was about to be fired. —That's the real thread of this story because it comes back to Koch. The governor's office would leak "about to be fired." She would get all upset and she'd call the governor, what's this all about? Don't be silly you're doing a great job. We're all behind you. How twisted—He did this to several of his female commissioners. He might've done it to some of his male commissioners too. He's not the world's best guy *[crosstalk]*.

Q: Sounds like a winner.

Barwick: But in the course of all this going on, Joan —she's very upset, needless to say —and she decides to call people to try to get help to save her job, and she calls Ed. His response to her is you're getting exactly what you deserve.

Q: No, really?

Barwick: I remembered like the dog, I remembered this episode. It was when Ed was running, the first time, for mayor. You know how people give these cocktail parties, in their apartment, and you have a drink and then —

Q: —Write a check

Barwick: —The camera man rushes in. He gives a speech for feminism, are there any questions, and everyone writes a check. He's on to the next thing. I think it was in Joan's apartment on Ninety-Fifth street. I still remember I was seated on a couch, Mary Kaplan was on the floor in front of me—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I was at the cocktail party of Joan's—

Q: For Koch?

Barwick: For Koch, for candidate Koch, and he gives the speech. Fine. “Are there any questions?” A couple of questions that are just softball questions, like what do you think about the balance of traders? Behind me is Jack Kaplan. “Hey.” He really gives them—I think it was the subject, I think it was related to Israel. I think it was more skeptical of Israel than Koch—I think Koch was very either because he believed his official position was—

Q: Pro-Israel—

Barwick: —Pro-Israel, which was not an unusual position. But Jack was hammering him, and asking a follow-up question. It ended up, it was not a friendly thing. I think Koch was pissed and

I think so was Joan, thirty years after she makes the call, you got exactly what you deserved, it's like the dog.

Q: wow he sounds like—

Barwick: He's a wonderful guy, he never once interfered with the work *[unclear]*

Q: Well do you feel, seeing this trial by fire up in Albany, kind of prepared you for the politics of landmarks?

Barwick: It certainly prepared me to be disabused of the idea that, I had any—I understood better the flattery, the cajolery, conduct of things. But I was still pretty —working for Ed Koch was to be—I was pretty insulated from—he didn't interfere. For most of the time that I worked there, the caliber of the deputy mayors—they were really first rate people. They didn't call up and say the district leaders niece Liz, wants her dungball building designated so they can lower the rent. That didn't happen.

Q: Why don't you think it happened?

Barwick: I think this is actually a focal point. I believe Koch viewed the Landmark's Commission as a quasi-judicial agency. If you think about his own background as a young political activist in Greenwich village, moving from the member of the political club to the leader of the political club to being a councilman, if you go back and look at some of those

campaigns to save the village. Often there's this tall guy in the back holding up a sign 'Save the Village' so I think—this is my theory, but I think he as a politician understood that historic preservation was on the agenda the same way schools were, or seniors or crossing lights. It was just one of those things, particularly in the district where he'd grown up politically, it was an important issue. I think he treated it as such. I don't think he interfered generally with most of them.

One time, there was a dinner at Gracie mansion. At the dining room table—a number of commissioners were there, generally with their wives or husbands. I remember at the cocktail party he asked people going around to say who their guests were. Henry Geldzahler was there with his lover. *[laughter]* It was, I think, the first time in history of political discussion that. — and Henry was very funny about it. But at this dinner—I'm not sure it was the same dinner—another time, Gordon [J.] Davis and I were seated across from Koch, and he said I don't tell you who to hire, do I? Because I couldn't hire anybody.

Q: *[laughter]* But you could appoint.

Barwick: But we both said no, no. Then he thought for a minute and said, "Do the county leaders tell you who to hire?" This is before of course, the whole thing with Donald [R.] Manes and the guy from the Bronx—Stanley [M.] Freidman. I think Koch was pretty clean, very clean honestly. I was just never interfered with.

Q: Wow and you don't think it was because he thought preservation wasn't important in some ways? You said he left it alone because he felt that—

Barwick: Preservation is important if you're a property owner and you don't want it. Or—you remember that section of *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, [by Tom Wolfe] which people take as true.

Q: Which section?

Barwick: It's where the mayor is pissed off at some black leader and he calls up the Landmarks Commissioner and says "I want you to designate that, Barwick's church up on 127th street or something." Landmarks Commission says "Of Course." [laughs]

Q: Yes, anything for you.

Barwick: That never happened.

Q: But do you think he treated—he left you to your own devices the same way he left city planning or other agencies or do you think he in general didn't interfere into the various agencies?

Barwick: That's a good question. It's not that he was afraid to have policies. I had to—I wanted to do a lot of things because, why be in such a job unless you're going to do something, but also we had won the Grand Central case. So there's this vast backlog of things that should have been

done, that the commission had realized should've been done in 1964 –the Yacht Club and the Woolworth building and the Upper East Side Historical District. There were buildings all over town, obviously. I wanted to move on these. But I learned that I had to sell it, I couldn't just do it.

For a long time I looked for my boss. I'd go over to City Hall and brief the Mayor and Deputy Mayors. I remember one time Renee Mitchell [phonetic] said to me, "Why are you telling me this? Maybe —they don't think you're working for them, don't go over there so often, unless there's something you really want." I was lucky to have as the—the Deputy Mayor that was closest to a person that I —didn't really report to but dealt with—was Bobby [Robert F.] Wagner [III]. And so, I brought him briefs, I'd make arguments, bring him along on things that were sort of out of the ordinary. I remember we wanted to designate and did, the Dutch street pattern. Made a lot of people nervous and I think it's still in possession of the City Planning Commission. I took and gave him, sort of the map what do you call it? —that you know, the map showing the Dutch streets?

Q: Cortelyou place?

Barwick: Not the Martel [phonetic], but anyways, for a long time Bobby had it in his office and I think after he left the other chairman of the commission had it in their office. *[laughs]*

Q: That's cool.

Barwick: Didn't belong to me. *[laughs]*

Q: Are you being blinded Kent?

Barwick: No, I love the sun. Also I'd been very badly burned, in the —at the time we were doing the Upper East Side Historic District which I really prepared them for —

Q: Them being the Koch administration or them being the commissioners?

Barwick: Them being the mayor's office. That took years to get everyone lined up do, and then we had to wait because of the embarrassment to city planning, they had to act —One of the things that the Real Estate Board would say, "the Landmarks Commission is just doing the Planning Commission's job. They have no business doing this." So we waited a year for the Planning Commission to invented some mildly supportive zoning to go along with it. I would bring Bobby particularly along.

While we were doing that, all was going well. We wanted to do historic district around City Hall Park. There were all these buildings the city owned that were all run down, and there was the Woolworth Building and the Potter Building. The Woolworth building always had been an opponent of it and I thought —Dorothy [Miner] and I and Lenore Norman had gone to see *[unclear]* Woolworth—I thought they had accepted it.

We'd gone to brief them and then later there was a conversation with Dorothy and Lenore—you'll have to ask Lenore about this sometime—came back and said, "They're furious about being singled out, they wouldn't mind being a historic district or something." That proved to be either a lie or misinterpretation of what had been said because the Woolworth Company then went out and hired experts to oppose the district. First I knew about it, we got call for Kevin Lynch, *[unclear]* a hero of mine up at MIT and said, "What's going on? I've just been hired by—

Q: By Woolworth?

Barwick: The emergency coalition to oppose the designation, to do testimony opposing this. Anyway we got our heads handed. Even though Jim—you know who Jim [James F.] Capalino is?

Q: Yes.

Barwick: The business partner and a lobbyist, he was then head of the —what do they called it, the DGS, [Department of General Service] or the people who owned the buildings. He wanted to spruce up those buildings. Most—some of them have been, like 51 Chambers or the old Stewart Building, the two story building. The city owns some quite wonderful buildings. Really, I haven't been to Calcutta but, I can't imagine anywhere there's anywhere, —they wouldn't let employees go to the ladies room, I mean, they'd be mugged at best immediately, you know it was just the sewers, awful. So Capalino was in favor of this, but—

Q: He was in favor of the landmark?

Barwick: Oh yea he was very helpful. But City Hall said you can't have a two front war.

Q: And there, City Hall was basically —because of the pressure from the development company or in part because there was so much city owned land?

Barwick: Well often, no I think it was the development community. The city agreed—Capalino was in charge of his thing. The truth is I don't know, and now that I know about some more of the players and other connections. In those days, it was understood that there was an absolute prohibition against designation of any property in Lower Manhattan. On one side, on the east side it was below Fulton Street. On the other side it was a little higher. That was the Downtown Lower Manhattan Association. Justin Murphy, now in retrospect, I bet Justin Murphy took Diane Coffee [phonetic] to lunch and that's how it happened but anyway. We backed off—

Q: That's how the opposition—

Barwick: —I don't know that, I was told that you can't do both.

Q: So kind of going in though, so Koch wasn't necessarily—did Koch set an agenda of any sort for you as Landmark's Commissioner or Landmarks Chair or was it you going in—probably a little bit of both but did Koch set an agenda?

Barwick: No, no, he didn't say I hope you're going to do X, Y, or Z.

Q: So then what did you decide from the get go what your agenda was?

Barwick: First of all, I, as a matter of practice, I was among the least expert on the Commission in terms of architectural history, and so we put together sub committees—we had this very good—I was very lucky the people on the commission when I was there were Elliot Willensky, Bill Conklin, Charlie [Charles A.] Platt, Tony [Anthony M.] Tung, Mary Black, they were fabulous people. They were—the architects could read a building at ten thousand feet. Tony Tung was a real pain in the ass but so smart and so—I'm very fond of him. We became good friends. It was really very heady stuff and so we would meet to talk about what to do, to the extent that I—because I was at the controls, it was to—now we will designate the things that should've been designated in the first place, the obvious things, and we will continue to do historic—Beverly had introduced the idea of historic—historic district had been forced on Harmon and he hated it, and didn't believe in them.

It's ironic, the thing that's so novel about New York is the law and its ability to designate individual structures. It was well established at that time, it had been done since the '30s in other cities that you can have districts. They didn't want the districts. They looked at it—the Landmark's Commission staff historically looked at historic districts the way architectural historians did. They would— if there were buildings that weren't pristine or well maintained or there were vacant lots, that made them all nervous. They wanted to just protect the buildings that

were significant. Their designation maps —we all used to laugh at them and call them the Chinese dragon maps.

When they were getting ready to designate Greenwich Village, one of the first districts done. —I wasn't there, I was on the outside—they had a map, I've seen it, which looked like twelve districts. They left out all the avenues and the corporation council wasn't wild in those days about the whole process anyway, said I can't defend that, you're never going to know where you are or when you're in or when you're out.

Q: There's one ugly building left out.

Barwick: He's a very important guy Lee [phonetic]—these are the things that need to be in these histories more than dogs or Jack Kaplan irritating Ed Koch—very famous corporation council and he just—

Q: Let me get that—

Barwick: Lee is his first name, *[unclear]* they're not hidden anywhere. He said, look I can't defend this. So it then began to draw the lines. The way I saw it as a non-architectural historian, you need to draw the boundaries to take care of the things that will change in the future. It's taken care of —It's for granted that the Sistine chapel, we hope will stay when the parking lot next to it or the gas station down the block comes up, we want to be able to control the quality of what you're doing there. That's what it's all about.

Q: To control the quality of the new architecture coming in or just even for regulation?

Barwick: Yes, I think there was a kind of a —this is a saying that I'm over saying but I've always detected a most better trend, in architectural historians an interest in protecting the thing that was significant rather than projecting down the road to see what, where change was going to occur. I don't think they were as cognizant of change, other than lets prevent the change of having this torn down, which of course is the most significant. There were all these tensions in the historic districts. Harmon had been reluctant to force in any historic districts there were. Beverly had seen them as a broad planning tool and was writing out in all directions, and I was really very much of the Beverly camp.

Q: So did you see it at that sense of, okay let's look at what's in the neighborhood now and how might this change if we don't designate this at this moment?

Barwick: Oh absolutely, we were always, in my mind we were always looking at the soft sites. What is the character of this area? And also the fact that we had to defend so hard —It was interesting, to get the Upper East Side Historic District done required years of work.

Q: Yes, why was that one so—

Barwick: Because the real estate was worth so much. One of the things that was said was this is ridiculous. These buildings date from all over the place. There's no coherence here. We went

back and studied Brooklyn Heights and Greenwich Village. There was no coherence there either, there were buildings from the late Eighteenth Century and buildings from the early Nineteenth Century and buildings from—

Q: Nineteen thirties hotels.

Barwick: The Upper East Side was in fact much more cohesive than that. And then, there's the Real Estate Board led by Dan [Daniel] Rose, he was the principal, who wanted Madison Avenue left out of it. There's no buildings of significance there and they're all protected by rent controlled tenants. And if you designate, you'll kill the shopkeeper. So first we studied the—we knew it was going to be a fight. Madison was an afterthought avenue. The blocks between Madison and Park and Madison and Fifth were very short blocks, and if you take the Madison Avenue one hundred feet out, you almost don't have enough to see the walk. We couldn't leave out in all conscience the Madison avenue—and then we studied the presence of rent controlled tenants. Well guess what? They were mostly gone.

Q: Oh interesting.

Barwick: Thrown out or pushed out or bought out and what not. I mean this was going to be—a place with a lot of development. The final thing was how to regulate the shops so that you wouldn't put everybody out of business. The configuration of those shops—first of all, the shops were not original. The shops had been added to the brownstones that were put up on Madison Avenue. After Madison went in with these buildings put up for lower class people, and then

when shop fronts came in, came in either on the basement or parlor floor or both, so you had the kind of double decker shopping like Newburgh Street.

People were helping us, like Holly [William Hollingsworth] Whyte, who'd been part of MAS from the very beginning, said this street's one of the most vital shopping streets it in the world. *[unclear]* You want to hang on to it. But the economic configuration was places where —the amount of money, rent being charged was astronomical for those shops. They were —key money was changing hands, and you think of what was in it —This one \$10,000 Italian suitcase, if you don't sell one every month you're out of business—

Q: But all you have to do is sell one.

Barwick: —constant change so we figured, listen, why don't we do a master plan for all the shops that are not original—here and there, there were shops that have been architect designed as part of the original structures, so they were subject to more regulation than everything else. So we said, look as long as you don't creep up further into the building, as long as you don't break out horizontally so you lose the sense of the modularity of the street, do anything you want. You want chartreuse banners, put them up. Because you know the turn over is such, they won't be there a while—

Q: So these were the design regulations that you—

Barwick: But it took long time to move Frank Sanchis. We drew the entire street, Frank Sanchis and Charlie Platt worked on it. All these were ways to—we also identified all the buildings that were so called no-style. That meant you can get a permit to demolish this building, you just need to get a permit to build a new one, in a design we think is sympathetic. The reason I started on that long winded thing, which might be interesting, in terms of the future of commission, what the thinking is, because the Chinese dragon thing comes back over and over and over again.

What do you mean? You can't have the avenue there. Look at that, that's a—

Q: How does this fit in—

Barwick: —we need it, why is that there? It had to do with the evolution of the commission approaches of historic districts.

Q: But that idea thinking about a historic district and thinking about what the change might be in the future. How would you—I think there would be some people who would say, that just means you're anti-development. How do you—

Barwick: That's what we were trying to do, by deregulating the shops—

Q: Yea I think that's a good point.

Barwick: —identifying the buildings that could be torn down saying look—also a part of that comes out of the thinking before this time about what a scenic landmark was. Because when you build a building, well the light might change, on the surface of the building. That's the way it's supposed to look but when you do a landscape plan it's more like a movie. You plant trees and shrubs and everything is going to change over time.

You're really doing—what do you call it, a storyboard for the future of the landscape, because this is what it looks like today and you're making these changes. This is what it's going to look like here and when you gets to here you're going to have to prune these three things back, or else you'll have that design, you're not going to be able to stand here and see the tower or the great elm tree or something. Change is constant is the point. If you see, I think you have to see historic district that way too. *[Crosstalk]*

Even in a short life, the changes of streets and neighborhoods are so profound. Who would've dreamed that the street that I'm living in, which as recently as the '70s was kind of a slum, that you're getting \$15,000 a month for a store front.

Q: Did you ever think even with early districts, like Soho— the West Village or Soho was later.

Barwick: I worked on Soho, from the other side from the—that's when we had two motives there. One was to protect, well excuse me to answer your question—

Q: I guess my question was just—thinking about Soho and how regulation has dictated incrementally improvements to storefronts, of window replacements, or new infill buildings. As chair, did you ever have a sense of how much landmarks regulation would kind of impact the way or shape the way the neighborhoods look today?

Barwick: Yes, we're very conscious. Under the law, you had to get a permit. If it was a protected building, unless you were just doing something inside, for which there was a certificate of no exterior effect, you had to come in front of the Landmarks Commission. We kept trying, I'm sure every commission has, to make that as predictable as possible but also to hang on to the things that matter. We had a lot of fights about—I remember one time Elliot Willensky, insisting I go with him, and we walking through the west village. He was particularly interested in the commercial buildings, what had been manufactured in the commercial buildings at the edges of the district, that the Landmark's Commission under Alan Burnham, and what was his name, James, the famous historian who was the first architectural historian for the Commission?

Q: Oh James Van Der—

Barwick: James Van Derpool [James Grote Van Derpool]. Van Derpool and Alan Burhnam, their trainees very much were working at the commission even when I got there. They weren't, they were interested in the early Nineteenth Century buildings. These former little factories at the end; we weren't paying attention to them. We were routinely letting them be —back in the seventies, a lot of them over west were being converted into apartments and things. It was sad,

Elliot was upset about this. He took me around and we walked—like twenty-five buildings and came away, yes we have to pay more attention to this. Did you know Elliot or not?

Q: No.

Barwick: He had a very good eye of course, and a good sense of whimsy, and a sense of what made the city interesting. He looked beyond the architectural historian's view of things.

Q: Then thinking about that in a way with coming up with— thinking about districts, you weren't just seeing what was there at the moment, but you were seeing the potential for the place. You were seeing that landscape scene of ten years down the road of what you were creating.

Barwick: Which also led to another set of philosophical discussions. You're never philosophical when there's a building in front of you and its midday and you're arguing about it. But that's what Tony brought to it. Tony's view, which he articulated, was that in a historic building, the standards for architecture are higher for, not the buildings that, of the contributing buildings, but they're higher for the infill building and the commercial buildings, and the shop—the two story shops on Eighth Street. They should reach a level of architectural excellence that is different than the rest of the city. It's not that it's just okay, do anything you want as long as you don't make it higher than three stories because the important building down the block is three stories, and that led to a lot of agony.

First of all, at some level he was right, he was often right. I needed the votes. Every meeting of the commission had to count the votes. If somebody wasn't there and you could—if you only had seven that day or eight, not eleven, and Tony, or Tony and Elliot, or one other person said well let's wait, I couldn't get the votes. *[laughter]*

The practical politics of it, the human dynamic, but it was a very respectful dialogue, which in part, it happened because we had a mayor who wasn't interfering—I don't think Bob could do this. We had a period following Grand Central—we felt that we had, we had the confidence of the, not that we were sloppy about it, but we were propelled, buoyed up by the decision. We had the sense that what we were doing was important.

And my own—everyone has their own style of how they do things, I know some—Laurie [Beckleman] who I loved, we worked with for years, a close friend. She didn't like a lot of conversation, she didn't welcome the debate. I think probably the debate took longer than it should have and drove other people crazy. I'm sure you can imagine to the other person in the debate is always targeted.

But there was a real level of discourse that I think has been absent, not because of the—Gene. We're lucky to have people capable of such a discourse. At the same time that the stars would allow it and my own approach is to try to draw a consensus rather than say here's what we're doing today, which takes longer to brook consensus. But so I think it was the person who should be talking about this, for your—sometime is Tony.

Q: Someone just interviewed him so he should be on the record for this.

Barwick: Well he has a lot of things to say in general but about the significance of the discourse on the commission. There's always an argument, why you must keep your mouth shut because it's all going to go to court. Dorothy always had that view, don't say anything because it'll be used in the court case. There's some truth in that but it was an honest search to be—to protect and to be as elegant in the protection as possible, respecting the owners, whether they were little old ladies in Bushwick that needed the money to play along with it or were the most horrible developers of Midtown. We had to respect their ability to use the property and to be as predictable and sensible as possible.

Q: If Koch was kind of hands off, what was your relationship with the heads of the other agencies. What parks or planning, particularly parks in light of that? Hecksher?

Barwick: They developed. [*cross talk*] Hecksher was earlier. By the time, in the administration, we all came in together so we were like freshman in a dorm. In fact there was a party given at the Whitney for Henry, for Gordon Davis, for Bruce Ratner, and for me. We were all seen as the young nice kids that were coming into the—

Q: Wait, where was Ratner at that point?

Barwick: He was Commissioner of Consumer Affairs.

Q: Oh okay.

Barwick: And a nice guy. All his work is, *[laughter]* not the best. Gordon, with him—Gordon's competitive and testy, and theoretically, I was part of his administration because the Landmark's Commissioner was a vassal at the parks department. Henry was good, he was very helpful.

Q: Did you all run— was there a closed door meeting of running projects by one another? how did that work in terms of—

Barwick: Well the commissioners needed the Landmark's Commission approval. And you also develop friendships. I remember one time the Brooklyn Botanic Garden wanted to tear down their greenhouse. It's a big beautiful—

Q: The one that's still there?

Barwick: Yes, oh it was magnificent—

Q: It's so incredible.

Barwick: And we were getting nowhere saying no. I asked Henry Geldzahler to intervene. Henry and I went out there with Howard Golden. Did you ever know Howard Golden?

Q: No.

Barwick: *[laughs]* He was the Borough President of Brooklyn.

Q: No I didn't know him.

Barwick: The way it's built is, there's a wall coming three feet or so. There's a foundation , there's grass and a wall, and above that is the steel frames and the wood frames and the *[unclear]*. The wall's brick has been parched. Here and there the building has cracks. We get down there and Howard goes, I've seen enough, I see this has to be destroyed. We wouldn't agree. I learned a few things along the way, one of which was they didn't have to obey the report. They didn't have to take the recommendations but they couldn't act until they got one. Often that's what we were doing was just we wouldn't let them— oh I found a—

Q: So you're just delaying the vote or just delay the report?

Barwick: One of the worst things we've ever done was to Joe [Joseph] Papp, and he's a great man and a hero. He's still alive and Giorgio [Cavaglieri] was still alive and Joe Papp wanted to put some kind of a flying bridge on top of the Papp Theater —the Hebrew library on Lafayette Street. I think Joe—I think Giorgio designed it, and it couldn't have been worse. Nobody wants to say no to John Papp so we just wouldn't issue the report.

But often times —I remember the guy who was about to be corrupt. Tony, there two Tony's. [Anthony B.] Gleidman, who was HPD, and, [Anthony] Ameruso, who was Meade [H.]

Esposito's appointment to be head of the—That's when you asked me earlier, did Koch treat all these—I don't know because I was appointed by a committee of civic and cultural people who were you know, middle class people, people who were appointed because me and Esposito wanted them appointed. That might've been a different thing but I found that Tony Ameruso was a good guy.

I remember one time, DOT [Department of Transit] came in, somewhere in Jaimaca, —you probably know the church—they were going to widen a boulevard, which was going to mean on one side of the street, where all these beautiful historic trees and a fence, historic graveyard with revolutionary war soldiers, and now a black church—

Q: I don't know which one it is.

Barwick: I can recapture, it's interesting. That's the good thing about the report process is that—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I called Ameruso. I said, you know, why don't you widen the other side of the road and not this side. And he went, no problem. Because the people that they would send to the hearings were just deputy commissioners in charge of getting yes for an answer, but the commissioners were at least —they knew the press might get it. [*crosstalk*] if you were reasonable, they were reasonable. It wasn't always the case but generally was the case. And there's also a feeling—at

least in that administration, I think in this one, I think it's true at heart —that you're part of the team, you're all part of the team, you're all part of the—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: How are we doing?

Q: How are you doing?

Barwick: I'm good for a little more. We're not getting very deeply into things but that's alright.

I think the planning people we had the most relations with and Bobby Wagner who was head of planning for a lot of this, and he and I were friends before this, his level of knowledge of the city was absolutely encyclopedic.

Q: Wagner's knowledge?

Barwick: Yes, absolutely. He grew up in a family that, he knew—I remember one time, it was a small dinner somewhere, when Koch was thinking of running for governor. June and I were at this dinner, with Koch of course, and Bobby and maybe Dan Wolf. I'll have to get back to you on that. You know who that is?

Q: No.

Barwick: So Ed was getting ready to run for governor. I said, just for something to say, gee I wonder how Governor [Herbert H.] Lehman ran in a place like Utica? The secret question being how would a Jew do in upstate New York. Bobby said well in the third ward he won by forty-eight votes and the fifteenth ward he lost by— I always found in any conversation with him, if you mentioned an address, he knew everything. He knew the district leader, he knew the ancient history. That was his—like growing up in a family business. If your family runs a pizzeria, you know—

Q: If your family runs the city, you know everything about it.

Barwick: Yes particularly the political part. He was—if you satisfy him on the politics—he was very much into things. I feel this is all very inadequate. He understood gestures, and he also understood that, you made to get along, he made gestures to interest groups. Rather he was therefore, asking me to slow down or moderate, or to consider moderating something.

Q: While you're at MAS?

Barwick: No this was in the city, in the city government. He ceased to be Planning Commission Chairman and became Deputy Mayor. He and Nat [Nathan] Leventhal were the deputy mayors that I dealt with and they were both—Renee [phonetic] was a wonderful person but mostly she wasn't involved. I didn't deal directly with Diane. I suspect now looking back, on some of these

things like lower Manhattan, she was so friendly with Justin Murphy. She's probably is the one who handled cutting my throat on that.

Sitting outside Ed's office was Dan Wolf, and Dan wolf had been the editor or publisher of the Village Voice during this period of time when politics became liberal in the Village and the Village Voice became a nationally recognized force. He was an advisor to Ed, and I think he was also pro certain things. I got him to—when we started later, maybe we'll talk about this another time, talk about religious landmarks.

Q: Yes.

Barwick: When it was getting to be a big issue, the Walsh Committee was trying to break the Landmarks Law, to lose money around upstate New York, you know, doing retail politicking to save the Landmarks Law. I thought it would be a good idea to have some people on the commission who were more visibly religious. Bill Conklin was in fact a deeply religious person but he's kind of a polytelic sect of Lutherans or something—Not a big block of New York voters. I mean in a very little [*unclear*] form of Christianity.

But I knew that Joe Mitchell, the aforementioned stuttering writer, was deeply religious. He was vestry at Christ's Church, where I went to church, and he took bible classes and everything else, so I thought this would be perfect. I mentioned it to Cindy Hall [*phonetic*] and Dan Wolf in particular. Dan Wolf loved the idea of Joe Mitchell's—nomination was advanced and within seconds on the Landmarks Commission, gets on the Commission. He was a wonderful

commissioner. It's too bad you didn't know him. You sense his intelligence, but his passion is what was so surprising because he was so repressed in every aspect. The way he dressed, he looked so courtly in his southern speech, and his small circle of New Yorker friends. But he was one of the most passionate people you'd ever run in to.

Q: Was he outspoken on the Committee? Would he earn the Commission?

Barwick: So the day comes, he's on the Commission not more than a couple of weeks and there's a case in Lower Manhattan where Trinity Church wants to build a bridge across—you remember where that north south street is, there's a bridge across there because they have an office building on one side and a church on the other and wanted to get back and forth, to get the seniors back and forth. They designed a bridge—and the design isn't very good—and there's a hearing on it. The community hates it and they're testifying against it. The rector of the church, Father Henry it was at that time, he's there getting a little angry but in the back were all these other clerics. Their faces were getting redder and redder between their white collars and their white hair.

I decided it was time to play my new toy. “Well commissioner Mitchell I understand that—I know that you're a vestry in the Episcopal Church and should be sensitive to both sides of these issues. Anything you care to say?” He's said, “Its just like Trinity, they're so arrogant. They've always been so arrogant in the community.” *[mimics bomb sound][laughter]*

Q: Wow, did you detonate a bomb.

Barwick: Well, thanks. That was the moderator's influence. What a lovely man though.

Q: That was your secret weapon. *[laughter]*

Barwick: The secret weapon that—always worked. Remember the religious community, because it's hard now to see how furious they were in the Flynn/Walsh report.

Q: Yes do you want to get into the Flynn/Walsh today and just talk about the whole fight?

Barwick: Where are we, on question two?

Q: We're kind of—I'd have to look, we're all over. Do you want water or anything?

Barwick: They don't have coffee here, probably?

Q: They don't have coffee. We could run across the street.

Barwick: We'll just lose all that time. Well first of all I don't know, I think the Flynn—I think I was mostly at the MAS during that period of time. We're talking about the religious warfare.

Q: But you're at St. Bart's [St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church]— you were at MAS for St. Bart's?

Barwick: I was at MAS for the first part of St. Bart's. I don't know where the war began—I'd have to refresh my memory. There was a committee of people, some responsible are the archdiocese—I think that the archdioceses was kind of happy to try to undermine the Landmark's Commission. It was a guy named George [J.] McCormick. [*unclear*], lawyer later—something became revealed about him, I can't think of what it was. It wasn't any child abuse but there was something.

Then there was a guy from the Board of Rabbis who was quite slippery—I can see him but I can't think of his name. But the sort of leader was a cleric from Queens named Skip La Roux [*phonetic*]. He had sort of risen to prominence in the political arena and in the civic arena, by defending the rights of clergy to park illegally or something. He had a prior—

Q: Defending the rights for clerics to park illegally.

Barwick: These guys wrote a pamphlet called ministry versus mortar or something.

Q: I haven't seen that.

Barwick: I can't remember the order of these—St. Bart's of course was a very big one, St. Patrick's school in my neighborhood where I was accused of threatening a priest with prison—the priest is 103 this week. I was thinking of going and telling him I forgave him. It was nothing he would've done he was put up to the archdiocese or by this George McCormick. Monseigneur

[Nicola] Marinacci his name is *[unclear]*. St. Paul's and St. Andrews—there's another one. Yes, there was a guy—

Q: Some of these—you think some of these were from your MAS time and some of them were on the commission?

Barwick: Yes, St. Bartholomew's was happening when I was at MAS. We organized the torch light vigil outside and we had candles and did all these things but when we helped the MAS put together a team of consultants pro bono. One of them was Jim [James] Liao do you know him?

Q: No.

Barwick: He was the MAS CFO for some time. He became a *[unclear]*. He sort of went through the church's books and numbers, which were all cooked at that time. The MAS was playing an active role in opposing the demolition of, the construction they were building over the community house, fighting Tom [Thomas D.] Bowers. Tom Bowers was a southerner who made a few tactical mistakes. He began by attacking Brooke Astor and Jackie Onassis. In some way it was in his mind that the people who cared about historic preservation probably didn't care about people. And that may be true in some cases, but it certainly wasn't true in the case of Brooke Astor, one of the leading philanthropist in the city. So he—I think that was also a reflection of what Paul Moore [Jr.] who was the bishop thought. This little cast of characters keeps coming back.

Q: It was the cast of characters that cared about the buildings and not the people.

Barwick: Paul Moore was born a very rich man and I think he thought people who cared about historic preservation were the people in his mother's bridge club in Morristown. But he'd been more or less put in his position by Whitney Seymour, Sr.—You know he was one of the leading church figures in New York when they were having the search for the new bishop—who then broke of course with Paul Moore over this. Bowers was from Atlanta may have been reflecting on these things. But Bowers—there was a lot of press, and Bowers accusing the preservationist of being anti-Christ. Which years later when we lost we had to kiss and make up. MAS had its annual meeting there. It was all duly recorded by David—but Bowers wasn't the world's worst guy. He used to do a course at the New School.

Q: Used to teach a course?

Barwick: Well, he didn't really teach, what you do is arrange. What'd you is you'd invite in outside speakers, and then I think maybe for the whole year, you got \$800 or something. It was just enough to take the speakers to dinner. It was just something, a lot of people in New York do it, and I did it. I asked Tom Bowers and Brenden Gill, but they wouldn't have dinner with each other. Brenden said absolutely not. *[laughter]*

Q: That's great.

Barwick: I had to have dinner with Mrs. Bowers and Tom.

That was all going on in—I think the first round of Saint Bart’s, we embarrassed—I could have thousands of conversations about St. Barts and the time I was at the Landmark’s Commission. I think the next big round was in the Supreme Court when Gene was there so it was after I left. I think Gene organized a team, which included Tony—that’s when Gene and Tony were getting along. They later broke over the—

Q: Bryant Park.

Barwick: Have you interviewed Gene?

Q: Yes.

Barwick: All about Bryant Park?

Q: He wanted to talk about it and put it on the record.

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: That’s what I’m curious about too, not to jump from Flynn, but your experience with the real estate board and dealings with them as chair.

Barwick: Well they varied according to who was there.

Q: And to which specific designation, I imagine.

Barwick: Well there were these general themes, like the one we're talking about, which were sometimes being cooked up in cahoots with Bob Esnard in something called the Cooper Commission.

Q: That's on the list—*[crosstalk]*

Barwick: I'm still held in—I was appointed to the Cooper Commission.

Q: I have the report. It's not here it's at home. I can bring it in.

Barwick: Well it was very much an effort by City Hall to please the Real Estate Board in terms of clipping the wings of the commission. For those of us who were on it—it's like the soups in bowls thing where people—not everybody is playing the same game.

Q: yes. *[laughter]*

Barwick: I've repressed a lot of it because as I was very much involved in that too. I don't know how much of that Gene got into.

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I happened to be having a drink with Gene—I think the same—it was some meeting where people, I can't really imagine who, were chanting resign, resign, resign. I think by just sheer coincidence I was having a drink with Gene right after that.

Q: I can't imagine.

Barwick: I think he was pretty hurt by some of the stuff. It's always hard to know. I was spared by the—well, I wasn't fully spared it. But happily, I was working for enough of boy scouts and I made boy scouts decisions. I wasn't yelled at or fired. There were several instances— well I tell you, on of that theme is, how much he interfered with the department?

Q: Yes.

Barwick: The Landmark's Commission had a role under, an environmental review role, under community development funds. HPD was in those days, the way they cleaned up the city was to go around and demolish unsafe buildings. They got a lot of money from the federal government to do it. Their environmental review was to send over photographs a lot smaller than any you can even see on your iPhone, taken by Polaroid cameras by someone driving by at fifty miles an hour of buildings.

Our CD staff, survey staff, their job is to get the money from the community—It was federal money. It wasn't subject of the city budget. Beverly invented the idea of inflating the staff. She's

good. One of the jobs, she wanted to make one survey, Gowanus, back when historic district — part of the way the money was earned was to do these reviews. So I wanted to see—so I would sit there late at night with a magnifying glass going over these things. About the first night I was doing it, there were buildings to be demolished, some of the Broadway theaters. I think the review was to say whether you imagined they were eligible for the National Register or not. I probably hadn't gotten my first paycheck, and of course, the Koch people were deeply into this.

Q: Into demolishing the Forty-Second Street area?

Barwick: Well they were deeply into getting rid of those theaters to get the Portland hotel. Portland hotel was the prize and a lot of people were looking the other way with the exception of Joan Davidson and a few other people, Joe Papp. A lot of the actors had been arrested. There'd been a—there were about six theaters in the site of the Portland hotel, two of which were the Morosco and the Helen Hayes, were extraordinary and very important buildings that should've never been torn down. The actors were out in the streets protesting and getting arrested and locked up.

And I realized, Whup. This is a short assignment. You have to say these are eligible. That pissed off people, but it pissed off Koch—

Q: He never said it.

Barwick: Another thing that happened was that when—kind of an extension of the religious properties warfare, but the St. Vincent’s hospital wanted to rebuild and—I lived right on, at that time, on the corner of Eleventh and Fourth walking little baby Annie Barwick to school everyday, we’d go by the site of the St. Vincent’s hospital every day. Every one of my children was born in St. Vincent’s hospital. More than once we used the emergency room. When Annie was little she had a terrible attack of asthma one day, we rushed to get her into an oxygen tank.

So I had a lot of good feelings about St. Vincent’s. But St. Vincent’s had hired a catholic architectural firm who was truly terrible. They couldn’t have drawn their way out of this room. I’m sure they were good at building hospitals on the cheap or whatever, but no design involved. It was funny because, in those days, we sent the mayor, the commissioners sent the mayor a kind of a handwritten personal, “Here’s what’s going on.”

Q: Like how often?

Barwick: I think the police commissioner did it once a week. I think I, it didn’t matter, every other week or something. Now, in hindsight, my hunch is that these were read by Dan Wolf or someone. But maybe Ed was reading them, I’m sure he was reading the ones from the police commissioner. So after six months of getting nowhere with St. Vincent’s—including the following scene, one time I called—

Q: Getting nowhere in terms of?

Barwick: In terms of getting a satisfactory design, it was just awful.

Q: So they kept coming before the commission to present, and you kept sending them back and saying?

Barwick: Yes, right. At one of these—one time, I asked for and I went to see Sister Elizabeth who was the head of St. Vincent's, sweet old lady. It was cold, I remember I was wearing an overcoat, I went up the elevator and got off, the secretary took my overcoat and put it in the thing. Then she took me out to the hall and we walked down this way and then we walked down this way and we went into a conference room and there was Sister Elizabeth. We had a cup of coffee or something, and more or less said something along the lines of have you thought about perhaps augmenting the team you have with people who've worked more with historic buildings or in historic districts.

And we talked about it; it was very inconclusive. We got up and went back and retraced my steps to get my coat and then I saw that the—of course there was another door to the conference room. It was Sister Elizabeth's office and the architects were in there listening.

Q: You're kidding,

Barwick: Yes, no.

Q: The Catholic architects. *[laughter]* Doesn't seem too catholic, Kent.

Barwick: I think it's centuries old. I don't think they, *[unclear]* did a good job of keeping them alive. In the course of one of these things, this long thing, I was aware the mayor's personal doctor was at St. Vincent's. I was also aware there was a lovely guy who had been on the board of the MAS named John Mulhern who was head of the New York telephone company. Very religious guy, sweet guy, and his son, young Patrick [J.] Mulhern [Jr.] was the mayor's council and in the inner circle.

At one point in my biweekly letter I say, I'm sure you're very concerned about seeing things work out the right way in St. Vincent's. Kind of, I'm mentioning this but a dancing around report. And he wrote me back a note that said—I'm paraphrasing, "I'm sure it goes without saying but I'll say it anyway. You do what you think is right and over time if I don't agree I'll get rid of you." *[laughs]* Which is really pretty driven.

Q: That's a great response.

Barwick: I should ask him sometimes, but—

Q: That's a really great response.

Barwick: It really was because, it was —do the right thing over there and—

Q: *[crosstalk]* —you weren't at any point you were gone but it's for your own— yes.

Barwick: Because I kept running—even though I worked there and knew him for a long time, the papers were always filled with insinuations of dirty dealings—[*crosstalk*]

Q: Yes, I was going to ask you about that for the [*unclear*]. Was there ever the dirty dealing reported, and you going to have this conversation with Sister Elizabeth or anything like that?

Barwick: No, but there were other in the case of St. Patrick's. I'd gone to suggest to them a better way of handling it and that later, in the hearings, came out as me threatening the Monsignor with jail.

Q: No offense, because as Landmark's Commissioner you've got that much power.

Barwick: In the case of—They'd obviously read *The Bonfire* or whatever. The other one was, I can't think of this guy's name. He was Sunny Von Bulow's executor, [G. Morris Gurley] George something or other. Very rich guy but from the south. And at St. Paul's and St. Andrew's, they were also—you know the church on Eighty-Sixth and West End Avenue? The collected church by Robertson?

Q: Oh I do know the one. It's got the scaffolding around it.

Barwick: It was one of the poster children for the committee of religious leaders to oppose the landmarking of religious properties—Flynn/Walsh. Well the group that got the Flynn/Walsh

introduced. And so I went up and Charles Platt went with me, to meet with the—I believe this guy's name was George—the rector, but they don't call them rectors. I was sympathetic to them. First of all, my great-grandfather was a Methodist minister and my great-grandmother was a Methodist missionary when I was a child. I was the first to go to Methodist Sunday school, so I knew something about the religion.

I also knew that's unlike the archdiocese, if something happens to a church, they don't fix it, they call the chancellery—there's a business, there's a big operation of experts who probably screw it up. When something went wrong at St. Paul's and St. Andrews, which was going wrong all the time, they'd go to the yellow pages and call somebody, and get a roofer to come over and \$15,000 later the roof was worse. The goal was to say, we'd like to work with you. Our interest here is the main church. They own property to the east and then around the corner they own property. I said—I'm sure they had some sort of deal with somebody. They wanted to rip everything down and put an apartment house and that's where they were going to put some of their social services in the basement of the apartment house. That's why ministry versus mortar comes in.

Q: I have to look at that.

Barwick: Are we helping people who are alcoholics or have AIDS? Or are we, you know, preserving architecture.

Q: Yes, heartless architecture.

Barwick: I suggested they—they complained that there was no way they could develop the property. I said, the city is full of developers who are sensitive and smart enough to work this out. The development, brackets this—they then went to the [City of New York] Department of Investigations and accused me of trying to get them to work with corrupt developers. I learned later that once you've been accused the file is always open. About ten years went by, I called up and said, by the way has that ever been resolved? No, no—

Q: Not till you're dead.

Barwick: The case is still open, even then. *[laughter]*

Q: Well that's a scary thought.

Barwick: So, they were prepared to play rough. They were also jerks a lot of them, frankly. I mean the Sunny Von Bulow guy wasn't a jerk, he was just a bad guy—A student trader. Skip La Roux, the guy with the big cross?

Q: Was that Skip La Roux?

Barwick: Yes, apropos, nothing. It's funny we live in a huge city but the same characters keep coming up over and over again.

Q: It's our paths, we're kind of on the same path.

Barwick: Years pass after all this is over, the Flynn/Walsh bill thanks to Jackie and Tony and a lot of other—but it doesn't get anywhere and drifts a little. The MAS helps start something in the waterfront called the East River Apprentice Shop, which is over in Greenpoint. It's like—something Pete [Peter] Seeger was interested in. *[Unclear]* Pete Seeger and Clay Hiles—this is where Mr. Hiles and I became the highly effective duo that lives on.

Q: You got that on the record.

Barwick: Pete—actually we had lunch, and Pete says —Claire wasn't at this lunch I don't think, I don't know who was there. Peter and I, somebody else unusual. I don't know, somebody who's not part of—

Q: This is recent? This is the past ten years or something like that then?

Barwick: Yes, this is —anyway, Pete says “You know when my children were little I wanted to have them live closer to the land. We got out of the city, went up to the Hudson highlands. My brother stayed in New York kept on as a schoolteacher. I realize now that my brother was right, the future of the planet is in the cities and it's so important.” This was really heavy, you want to cry hearing this. And he said, “you know, in time, soon it'll be time soon for the Clearwater to be rebuilt. And when the Clearwater is rebuilt I want it to be right across from the United Nations. I

want all the countries of the world to see how we're working with kids to understand how to bring children back to the water.”

Q: This is amazing.

Barwick: So we went out and started walking, finding a place to start this. Some terrible friend of Pete's named Lance Lee was another whole chapter in this. He set up this East River Apprentice Shop which runs in Greenpoint manufacturing GMDC [Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center] center. We were way upstairs and the kids from varying local schools built these boats. We did this for two or three years, until a terrible thing happens which ends the program, which is a tugboat comes by with a barge and smashes all the boats. We had a hard time raising money for this program anyway—

Q: Oh Kent that's terrible.

Barwick: —With the highly effective management that Mr. Hiles and Mr. Barwick—

Q: Oh that's so terrible.

Barwick: It was a fabulous program.

Q: Is this right at Newtown Creek?

Barwick: Yes, yes.

Q: Is that the building right there?

Barwick: And we had a rowing program. Each spring, the big moment was the kids, boys and girls who had been building these boats, and unbeknownst to them they were learning arithmetic and geometry without anybody telling them they were—because you had to measure twice and cut, and if you cut wrong you had to go back and do it—so it was really cool to see these black teenage girls and other kids who really needed to get their hands on something.

Q: To make something.

Barwick: Of course, graduation time we'd invite the parents, and then the boat would be taken out. It would sort of be lowered by pulley down the face of the building, because that's kind of an awkward building, and then the kids would take it and put it in the water, with a hot dog, coke or something, you know, the event.

Q: The christening.

Barwick: Most of the kids, about eighty percent of the kids were black.

Q: From Brooklyn?

Barwick: They had live close enough to get there. That was one of the problems, we were trying to get help from the settlement houses and they weren't near there. But the second year, the third, the kids are catching the thing and carrying it to the water, there's white boy with a red Mohawk—You know what a mohawk is? And about as many tattoos as you can possibly get. He's very proud, carrying the boat in. The parents are there, he's Skip La Roux's son.

Q: You're kidding.

Barwick: No.

Q: Was Skip La Roux there?

Barwick: Skip La Roux was there, but we realized the kid of course—look here, all he had was a red mohawk and growing up—

Q: You're looking like he killed someone at that point.

Barwick: —an asshole like that for father. But I felt that was sort of a little bit of justice. We had helped this kid. I hope his life got better after that. He was clearly a troubled kid who found something using his hands, which helps some people too.

Q: You gave him a gift of productivity.

Barwick: And I hope it made Skip La Roux feel bad but I suspect somebody—

Q: Probably not.

Barwick: I don't know, I hope it made him feel good, I hope it made him think.

Well, that was a long drift something. Are we on the religious community?

Q: We're on Flynn/Walsh. *[laughter]* How are you doing Kent?

Barwick: I'm alright. Its three so we—let's talk a little more about Flynn/Walsh then we can talk—How many hours are you good for on this stuff?

Q: I'm here for as long as it takes you to get—

Barwick: I mean is this our one interview or one of thirty?

Q: The process is, at one point if you're willing, we'll do it on camera. We can come up with the questions like out of what —off the three hours today.

Barwick: Where I'm running down Beverly and Diane Coffee, Harmon Goldstone.

Q: The scandal, Governor Carey we're going to put all of that in. Those are all the stories that will go on camera. So one on camera interview, it could be the next one. Most of the other questions just talk about the general leadership of the commission and how you dealt with the staff and kind of how you change the working. See the next question? I think more Flynn/Walsh, more of the landmarks law and your workings with Dorothy and just the whole legal aspect. That would be—

Barwick: That's a short one. Working with Dorothy I was never able to get her to change anything.

Q: I think I told you. There's apparently an interview with her that's under lock and key.

Barwick: Until fifty years after her death.

Q: Until fifty years after the world implodes or whatever it might be. So, those are the other key things and whatever else you wanted to bring up and add for the record. The Rizzoli Coty Building [712 Fifth Avenue] if you want to talk about that. That was MAS, right? I think so. Or was that commission? Oh yes because Gene inherited Rizzoli Coty.

Barwick: Rizzoli Coty building figures in two ways. Mr. Wood and Mr. Barwick and others wanted the city to treat —while at MAS, treat the—revise the zoning for Fifth Avenue and have some special design characteristic for Fifth Avenue, maintaining the use of limestone. We got a

lot of people together for Sherad I think—I remember taking busloads of people from Morris Park to Sacks Fifth Avenue. Not Sacks, further up, Lord and Taylor.

I'm not sure which preceded which but in the midst of our proselytizing, what I don't remember whether this followed or preceded the Rizzoli Coty thing. But the Rizzoli Coty thing was that the lawyers, Sany [Samuel H.] Lindenbaum, for the developer—I forgot which developer it was, I used to know this very well.

Q: I had this somewhere.

Barwick: Anyway, the lawyers for the development—was it, Allen Topman [*phonetic*]?

Q: I don't know, I'd have to see.

Barwick: No. There's more to know here because this also got complicated with us getting help from Donald Trump to hire a foreman corporation council to oppose this—

Q: Whoa I didn't know that.

Barwick: Oh no, It's a very rich—

Q: Do you want to save Rizzoli Coty then?

Barwick: Yes, I think we should look it up.

Q: I'll look it up. I'll send you some—

Barwick: Tony knows a lot about that too. But he was also related to the campaign for Fifth Avenue, which involved Tony Wood running around *[unclear]* under a bus.

Q: I've never heard about this.

Barwick: Well, we wanted to be historic. The MAS ran a double-decker bus tour on 5<sup>th</sup> avenue called—which Vanessa used to run, you know Vanessa Gruen? To try to have it be an architecture—sort of like a version of your idea for the app, but the territory was just down Fifth Avenue up Madison Avenue and then you would see that slice of New York between Mount Morris Park and Washington Square. You'd see an enormous amount of history of New York.

Q: That's a cool route.

Barwick: We had a little red double-decker bus and some beautiful posters and you can get on and off anywhere you wanted. It was fun. But then one time, I don't know that that overlaps. The double-decker bus that Tony—Tony's was a yellow one, which was one that had been used on Fifth Avenue. Maybe we just did an event.

You know, it would be good to maybe send me an email saying, I hope the next time or sometime we can talk about Coty Rizzoli. It'll help me remember some of these things.

Q: And I can look up anything that you want looked up too. So do you want to save Flynn/Walsh, Coty Rizzoli for next time and do you want next time to be on camera?

Barwick: I didn't know there was an on camera part.

Q: If you're willing.

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: Well that makes me ask too Kent, what about images—you've been involved in so many things. So you have a collection of images?

Barwick: No, in fact I just realized this. Somebody asked me for a picture. I haven't dealt with my estrangement from the MAS, we were supposed to have a lifelong relationship, if I needed a photograph they would call and send me a photograph.

What are you looking for, photographs relating to some of these subjects? Well the MAS has some of those but whether they can get them.

Q: Where do you think they might be, just MAS storage?

Barwick: They're different things. There are the video tape collection, which is actually interesting on some of these subjects like the theaters. A lot of these subjects were—they used to have—there was a public television show, channel one or something. Where there would be like little talk shows about some of these subjects. We tried to start a television show. It was before videotape or else it would've been possible. We would have a feature section of film and we have a very good—you know Gordon Hyatt? Good documentary, when he was at CVS *[phonetic]*, filmmaker, he ran a lot of interesting films about New York. Then we would have a section called Four Men With Pipes, which would be, we would talk about something. We did several of these.

Q: I want to get my hands on that. Do you think those are still there?

Barwick: I don't know where they are. Do you know Phyllis Cohen?

Q: No, is she at MAS? Should I reach out to her?

Barwick: She is. Let's figure out how we can get in there, maybe Laurie can do that. Have you gotten what you need from your interviews with Laurie?

Q: Yea, I've done on camera with Laurie.

Barwick: From the MAS archives?

Q: No, not for images.

Barwick: Because Laurie a lot of the things like Grand Central, little Laurie was working on that. A lot of the stuff she, I think she might've been the staff person who organized the candle light vigil at St. Bart's. She's so active. I'm the trustee but I'm not the right one to ask.

Q: Maybe I'll call Laurie up.

Barwick: Yes, if you I mean—

Q: Because if we could get in there and get photos of her and photos of you, of some of the other campaigns too like holding umbrellas at central park.

Barwick: I guess it's sort of protecting something, I don't know what it is protecting but probably not a landmarks issue.

Q: Seems a landmarks issue.

Barwick: It's your call.

Q: It's related. It's all shaping the city.

Barwick: Well, it's a good question. Let me ask Phyllis. Oh I started to say that there's a whole group of videotapes. Do you remember videotape? It came in a cereal box and but there was a lot of good stuff that should be—yes people like Brandon Gill on camera. Stuff that really ought to be in the archive, stuff that would help inform some of these. It's not Times Square, that's certainly—I don't know what the land date of the archive is, preserving the character of Times Square.

In my view, I don't see these things as radically different. I think having a set of— the essence of Gowanus Canal, the industrial characters surrounding the streets, the essence of Times Square is the billboards and the theaters, and part of this is preservation of the theaters but part of it is preservation of the surrounding world, which almost disappeared in these campaigns.

Q: I think that's really important, especially I think that's really—

Barwick: Especially, I don't know that the clients—you always have to get the client to—

Q: I feel like it's well judgment call really. No, it's shaping the city I mean that's what preservation is.

Barwick: I remember that book.

Q: *Shaping the city [Shaping the City New York and the Municipal Art Society]*? Why am I blanking on what the book was about though?

Barwick: It's the hundredth anniversary book about the Municipal Art Society.

Q: Oh yeah, *[laughs]* Gregory [F.] Gilmartin.

Barwick: The Gregory Gilmartin book. The end, he fell apart at the end because he was behind on deadline, for three years or something, and panicked. But the beginning—a lot of the stuff he did was very, it precedes some of this. I think some of this we've touched on to, you know, may be in that book.

Q: Probably.

Barwick: So Flynn/Walsh?

Q: Flynn/Walsh, Coty Rizzoli and just the topic if Dorothy and the workings of more dealing with the legal aspects of landmarks and just talking about the leadership of LPC staff and the office.

Barwick: Talk about, that'd be good, we could talk about Lenore, Dorothy, Eddie, Walter Abbot [Wood].

Q: The name— is he still around?

Barwick: No he's dead. Oh dear, what's the name, the heavy set woman who was like *[unclear]* Margaret Tufts, Charles Hasbrook. Mr. Wood and I visited Charles Hasbrook's grave.

Q: Where is that?

Barwick: Where all those Hasbrooks live up in Ulster County somewhere.

Q: Hudson Valley.

Barwick: Charles was head of the survey group.

Q: Yes because if we talk about the staff then we can talk about the survey and everything else.

Barwick: Also the commission were such stars and I can't remember all of them, intellectual leaders.

Q: And I should get a list of who— I have an outdated one— who other than the chairs are being interviewed for this project and put that in front of you and see who else who's missing from the list. I'm sure there are a lot of people who we should get our hands on now.

Barwick: I wouldn't miss getting Bill Conklin.

Q: I'll ask Tony if he's gotten it.

Barwick: I mean Bill Conklin is, first of all, a man who—

[END OF SESSION]

Transcriptionist: Unknown

Session: 2

Interviewee: Kent Barwick

Location: Unknown

Interviewer: Liz McEnaney

Date: 2011

Q: So this is going. It looks like most of what we covered is gotten to the early history of you and MAS, how you got into preservation. We talked about Grand Central, Flynn/Walsh, briefly covered Rizzoli Coty. So there are two things, two areas that are really left to cover. One is delving into some of the specific advocacy campaigns that you are involved with—from Radio City to the theaters to Luchow's, and the fight at the towers on the Upper East Side. Weren't you fighting for—

Barwick: Towers Nursing Home? No.

Q: No, just the general, the skyscrapers or high-rise buildings in the Upper East Side?

Barwick: It's more Margot, I think.

Q: Do you want to dive in to some of those?

Barwick: I realized thinking about this yesterday, it's really helpful to have questions because most of this is gone.

Q: To have them in advance to prep it or do you want to go case by case?

Barwick: No, no, no, in anything that you ask, it provokes some of the right—

Q: Perfect.

Barwick: Also trouble is with anything, with any story, let's say Radio City Music Hall, which was big enough, maybe I will recall things— is that when you say something then ideas come, of course they may be too specific or too unconnected, so that's the—you're, at the end of it, looking for three sentences on Radio City Music Hall? *[laughter]*

Q: So I was reading up about Radio City last night because I was thinking the whole issue of interior landmarks and thinking about some of the issues you're involved with. One thing that struck me is the question of why you think interiors weren't included in the original Landmarks Law.

Barwick: I believe that there was a—This is just a belief. What my source is—I can't remember whether it's actually Harmon Goldstone, but there was a—I think there was just a feeling that you would be intruding on dangerous territory to be inside people's houses. I don't think they had focused really on—what we did later on the Public Accommodations section [Title II] of the Civil Rights Act [of 1964], which dealt with these issues head on.

Q: Wait. I don't know about that.

Barwick: In the South, and I'm sure other places as well, people who ran restaurants or hotels didn't want to serve Blacks—We reserve the right to serve who we want in a public space. The legislation said that spaces that had customarily been open to the public, that is that had advertised they were open—hotels, transportation hubs, theaters, whatnot—couldn't suddenly become private. That's against that's what the law said.

When we were struggling with how to, dealing with the, trying to define what the interiors should be eligible, we were guided by the Civil Rights Act and the so-called perfect Accommodations section.

Q: Oh, interesting.

Barwick: Now, we got into the Interior section because Harmon Goldstone came to see me when I was MAS and said that he wanted to—this is the beginning of a longer and unhappier story. He wanted to amend the law to make it specifically possible to include interiors. People will tell you, and I think with some justice, that the commission had the power already but the culture was that they didn't have the power. Harmon wanted to change that, wanted MAS to form a committee and research, had been doing. Later, we've already covered this or we come to another time. That committee decided, "That's not enough. *[laughs]* We're going to do four things not one."

Q: Yes, we're expanding the purview greatly.

Barwick: Well, because that was a moment when the—it's quite obvious that the purview needed

to be expanded.

Have we talked about this already?

Q: No, we haven't gotten into this.

Barwick: Alright. So preview of coming to practice at the—so we should. I think that's a very, in a way, more important than who danced on the steps of Radio City Music Hall, although not as much fun. That's how the interiors came about and as you know the Metropolitan Opera, the old opera house, was destroyed after there was a Landmarks Law. People felt that the commission should have done something but the politics were really difficult too—Both Mayor Lindsay and Governor [Nelson Aldrich] Rockefeller were part of the "Let's get rid of this building as soon as possible" and the Metropolitan Opera, we had plans for Metropolitan Opera.

There was a campaign, I wasn't directly involved, but I was aware then. Then later, come being friends with people who had, like Bronson Binger or Elizabeth Brockman, who had worked on it. There were all kinds of uses to which Metropolitan Opera could have been put. The Opera didn't want a big house that was capable of Sol Hurok. You know who that is?

Sol Hurok was a big producer who was extremely energetic. He would bring acts in from the Bolshoi Ballet. His area was the world and he was so, pick-and-choose things and bring them to New York, which he did anyway. The Opera House would be a great place for him to operate. I think the people tried to raise money from their patrons who were sort of sorry to lose the old

house anyway and move to Lincoln Center. They didn't want that sticking around.

That's a little background on interiors. When I came to the—We may have covered this topic you can stop me anytime.

Q: I will stop if we have covered it.

Barwick: The day I went to work as the chairman of the Landmarks Commission, I was sworn in the middle of the night so that I couldn't preside the next day over this hearing on whether Radio City Music Hall ought to be designated as an interior landmark. It was a frightening and exciting experience. But I hadn't met most of the commissioners. I knew one, Bill Conklin very slightly and Beverly, I knew.

So there was a coffee set up for the committee in the hall room so that the commissioners could meet the new chairman. Of course, I was terrified but I didn't—*[laughs]*. The people were pouring themselves cups of coffee and before they had the chance Beverly said, "I want you to know that the Landmarks Law's unconstitutional on it's face—" and dadadadah. *[laughter]*. And then left—

Q: Welcome aboard!

Barwick: Then left, and what she was doing, maybe she'd gone to the powder room. What she was doing was she'd gone out to the Board of Estimate, you remember how it used to be held

in— the Board of Estimate. the room that [Michael R.] Bloomberg used as the bullpen, I don't know how [Bill] De Blasio's using, it's really quite a beautiful and very successful room for its purpose. It's like a New England church. It's got a beautiful structure but it's also got a raised podium, horseshoe shaped, where the Mayor or if it was the Planning Commissioner or the Landmarks Commissioner, where the chairman would sit in the middle and a place that people could testify right in front of it. Literally, if you were where my coat is, the mayor would be right where those brass historians are, very close and in between was the press. I mean, extremely—

Q: Wow, such a different engagement from foreign engagement.

Barwick: I remember the first time I ever went to the Board of Estimate, I went with Joe Mitchell to protest the tearing down of McSorley's Salon. It was amazing. You had to wait in line a long time but then, there you were, and you were allowed to speak for a couple of minutes and there was the Mayor of the City of New York, like it was with Wagner, and the Comptroller and the bubububdum.

In those days, they sat there. The idea which came along just after that that, that these potentates were too powerful to sit there, they all had twenty-two-year old assistants sitting there who would combine arrogance with rudeness. And never even pretended not being elected officials but you look. The room is also from the other point of view, from the point of view of the chair, without moving your face, you can see every face in that room, the sight lines are incredible. That room was filled. What Beverly had done, while the rest was having coffee and how nice to meet you and what's your name again, and getting ready for this thing, Beverly had gone out and

rearranged the locations of where people were sitting.

Q: I envisioned the text cards coming out. *[laughter]*

Barwick: Exactly. The hearing proceeded and Beverly had been beating with Alton Marshall. Alton Marshall was a very smart man who was the Rockefeller-person-in-charge of Rockefeller Center, the building's Radio City Music Hall. I think he'd always been a top aide to Nelson Rockefeller, a very brilliant man. Among those, when they meet with you, is *[unclear]*, who said, "Well of course, I wrote all the Landmarks Law," for all I know some of it, I don't think they did. Once again, the pitch from Alton Marshall, not out in the hearing but in a private meeting was—we will privately, we don't want this building designated, we will privately assure you we won't do anything.

Q: This is what you're hearing the first day on the job, is this conversation? Or early on?

Barwick: Honestly, it would very useful to remember rather that's the conversation that took place the next day or the day before. It didn't take place the day of the hearing. That's a critical element and I'm afraid all the people involved are dead. No one will challenge me on that.

Q: This is why we're getting this on tape, the definitive story.

Barwick: Marshall also had the same story, which I'm sure he contributed to Beverly's feeling that the Landmarks was unconstitutional on its face and we're going to challenge it. Then you

get to say these things, you knew who you were talking to—the most powerful people in the planet. They were going to fight tooth and nail until the end of the world. The smart thing to do was enter into this relationship where we either have their assurance, or they will check back with us et cetera, et cetera.

So of course, I was wondering what to do. The former chairman had already announced that it's unconstitutional. So I had a meeting with Ralph Menapace and Whitney Seymour. Who was the third? Another really smart lawyer, Cyrus Vance. What I remember of the meeting was them saying, something that I came to understand and believe; the Landmarks Law is very simple, it's very straightforward. It's like an old recipe to make oatmeal in the morning, put it in a cup of this and half a cup of that, boil it for three minutes and then let it sit for one minute and then it's *bam, bam, bam*. There's no reason to part from that. There's no reason for you not to use the law. Of course, that was reassuring because these were my gods, you know Whitney North Seymour, and Ralph—I get so embarrassed that I can't remember who that person was.

It did not involve any of the staff of the commission. I don't think Dorothy was there, I think this was sort of outside advice. But anyway that's what we did—follow the law and designated the property.

Q: Can I ask was there going in having these conversations in getting this advice. What was the role of the Koch administration and did they advise you on how to handle a situation like this?

Did you feel that there were some unspoken ways that the administration wanted to deal with

developers or these types of people or do you feel you were given a lot of autonomy as chair?

Barwick: No one would believe the answer. My whole experience—first of all, I knew Ed Koch. I was aware of his grumpiness. I think I told you, when I was interviewed for the job, about the dog. I read the papers—but I found that Koch really—and I think it was the a general approach. Obviously, later when it turns out that Donald Manes and Stanley [M.] Freidman, everybody buying the *[unclear]*. I think he—I'll tell you my experiences and not the conclusions. There was no interference ever from him.

We used to have to send, I think it was, I forgot, every other week maybe, a handwritten note, kind of like a note to your mother from camp, here's what's going on in department. I think the big commissioners, the police commissioner, did it once a week. On the whole commissioners did it more sporadically, on different schedule. You know, when you say here's what and dadada.

When St. Vincent's was going on, I was under enormous pressure from all kinds of people. A lovely man, *[raps on table]* his name will come to me sometime. A guy who had been on the board of MAS, president of the New York Phone Company His son was with the Koch administration as one of chief lawyers. *[unclear]* He was in charge of one of the pope's coming here. Isn't that awful, I'll think of his name. I used to get calls from him.

I also get all these calls from—you learn after a while when you got a call from—this is Liz McEnaney in the mayor's office, and oh yes. Later it would turn out that it was Liz McEnaney in

the mayor's office of *croissant*. [laughter] There were people using marginal positions [unclear] to influence things.

I was aware that Koch—that was where his doctor was. It's in a couple of really [unclear]—I'm sure you want to know what's going on, department, here's what we're trying to do. Did we talk about St. Vincent's already?

Q: No, we kind of glossed—just mentioning it in relation to Koch and how important it was to you. We haven't got into it.

Barwick: Well, it was Byzantine, all over the woods. But to finish the Koch story, I'll come back to another St. Vincent's thing. I got note back, which, along the lines of, it goes without saying but I'll say it anyway. You do what you think is right and over time if I disagree, I'll get rid of you.

Q: Wow. You're right. No one will probably believe it but I think that's an incredible statement.

Barwick: No. I'll tell you about a—part of what I was trying to, John Mulhern. Perfectly lovely man, I'll give you an example. He was elected to the board of the MAS and the annual meeting that year was going to be on the [PS] Alexander Hamilton, which was tied up in Pier 16. Annual meetings at the MAS historically have always started at five o'clock or something. It's some leftover thing from east side life. Girls couldn't go out—I don't know what—[laughter]

Q: The moment the cocktail bell rings or something along those lines.

Barwick: Well it had to be before, like after that was no good, the meetings were always—as it happens always, it turns the people travelling by mass transit or even by carriage, an inconvenient moment. But the meetings were scheduled at 5.

I'm down on the pier with the staff of one and I think Bronson was there, Bronson Bayer *[phonetic]* who was, in those days, I think maybe he was working at the Seaport. Everything was all set except the chairs hadn't been setup. There was going to be a meeting for five hundred people in a minute. By this time, a big limousine had pulled up and was waiting on the pier. I went over and it was Mulhern. I said, Hi John, the meeting's in fifteen minutes but actually, we got to setup some chairs. He got out of the car and started setting up the chairs. Could not have been a lovelier man. He, of course, wanted this, the cardinal did, they wanted St. Vincent's to go their way. One of the biggest problems with St. Vincent's was the caliber of the architects who were selected because of their contributions on the Catholic Church. It's a firm you've never heard of, both names were Irish or something *[laughs]*.

Q: Yes, I can't remember.

Barwick: I couldn't remember for a million dollars for a cup.

I decided I would go see Sister Elizabeth to try to persuade her to bolster her team with some people who had experience in renovating buildings. This team, in addition to being, obviously

very Catholic, were, their work was hospitals. So they of course understood—it must be a very complex field. Nobody leaves the hospitals. So while you're in the operating room, they rebuild the room where your bed is, and then vice versa.

So the meeting around the parts must be very complex. I remember I went, it was a winter day. I went over to St. Vincent's. I went up the elevator and there was the receptionist was outside of Sister Elizabeth's office. She greeted me, she hung up my coat in the closet, and then she said, "Follow me." So instead of going where I thought we were going, we went down the hall and then we turned right, then there was a door, and we went into a conference room maybe a third bigger than this.

There was Sister Elizabeth, Mother Elizabeth and me. Dancing around the subject, I finally said, "You know there are all kinds of architects. I don't think that your architects are used to working with this kind of problem and particularly skilled at it. I think you would really profit from adding to their team somebody who can do something about this. Lots of smiling. At the end, I got up and went out the door and went back down the hall and back to the receptionist to get my coat. I was putting on my coat, I saw that the architects were listening to our conversation, through a door which was just this *[unclear]*. There were in Mother Elizabeth, Sister Elizabeth's office which of course—*[laughter]* *[unclear]*.

Q: It really is behind the red curtain.

Barwick: But Koch was a terrible *[unclear]*. I don't even know if there was any improvement to

the design, it was just crap. Of course, building rudeness took care of it, got rid of it.

We were on that because of Radio City Music Hall. We designated, and while we were— Beverly was very strenuous in the debate, which was once again, not helpful in case of a court challenge *[laughs]*. And world war three was going on. In this—you remember Bob [Robert J.] Dryfoos?

Q: No.

Barwick: I've met this person, who Tony knew pretty well—in this part of his life, he was the assistant to the Lieutenant Governor Mary Anne Krupsak. Mary Anne Krupsak, like many women who work with Hugh Carey, who was the governor—it's too painful for Joan to talk about but she kept, reinforce this idea. They treated Mary Anne Krupsak as a crack, as a lunatic. She was their Beverly, only he'd asked her to run on ticket, so she had a staff of one, this guy Dryfoos.

Dryfoos's career was that, he then went, he was the councilman from the Upper East Side. He became either head of the land use committee or he acted on the land use committee. Then he sold out the Manhattan delegation to make somebody speaker and was thought to be a rat, you know. So then of course, he went into the advising developer business.

Q: As one does *[laughter]*.

Barwick: I think, he maybe gone, he may have left the planet. He was an interesting guy. But in any case Mary Anne Krupsack decided she would get into all this, which I think embarrassed the governor. There were, maybe holding hearings—

Q: Why was the governor interested in the whole Radio City?

Barwick: He wasn't *[laughter]*. But Mary Anne Krupsack saw an issue, or Dryfoos saw an issue, somebody saw it. Richard Kahn was then head of the UDC [New York State Urban Development Corporation]. So Richard—you know Richard?

Q: I've never met him, but I know of him

Barwick: *[crosstalk]* I realize you probably running out of gas, just on names, with all these things. But Richard is such a powerhouse, he's such a figure and such amigo. I remember the first time I met with Richard he had his—Richard had these cufflinks that were the seal of the State of New York and they were just about the size of the round circle on your phone.

Q: Which for the record we'll say is quite large, *[laughter]* bigger than the silver dollar.

Barwick: So Richard—some of the other person and I were in there talking to him—Maybe it was Laurie I can't remember who—Richard *[thumps table]* put his elbows on the table with his fists up in the air and you were looking that his face flanked on the left and the right by these bowers and the great seal of the state of New York. Anyway, Richard somehow, I forgot what

powers he used, got command of Radio City Music Hall and began to program it. And he brought in outside —there were all kinds of ideas flying around what could be done and the Rockefeller's had pointed out—I think accurately it was losing money and they wanted to be done with it. It was time to go. Richard, by bringing programming to it—they started to do better, they started to make money. What I can't remember is —talk about senility—it was never litigated, I think it was sort of resolved. I know what it was—they wanted to proceed on hardship.

Q: The Rockefellers wanted to proceed on hardship?

Barwick: Well, the Radio City Music Hall. Obviously it was separately incorporated. I think the—Is there—*[taps on table]*. Is it ever three days that go by and you don't want to pick up the phone and ask Dorothy?

Q: More and more. Dorothy and Paul Byard—I would like to pick up the phone and ask them a few questions.

Barwick: Did you go to the Byard lecture? I just got the invitation yesterday.

Q: I did. It was fabulous.

Barwick: Anne Beha?

Q: Yes, she was absolutely a rock star.

Barwick: I get all these from—What's his name? Mark? He's the dean.

Q: Mark Wigley.

Barwick: Was he a good guy?

Q: He's leaving.

Barwick: Oh, really? Where is he going?

Q: Actually, I don't know where he is going.

Barwick: Spend more time with his family? *[laughter]*

Q: It's a very good question of where he's going. But the question of Dorothy, of hardships, and all these—

Barwick: Well Charlie Platt may remember some of this. Isn't that awful? That Lenore's dead now too?

Q: I should see whether Charlie has been interviewed.

Barwick: Adele. Will you be interviewing Adele?

Q: I don't know whether someone else has done Adele but she should definitely be on the list. I think you're right about Richard Kahn.

Barwick: Part of these things is after you talk to—I mean you know, you think these are distinct eras but with land use they're always overlapping. And so something started under Harmon was still cooking around in act three under Beckleman. So that, so when you get—somebody has the energy to read these things and say, “Oh well actually that's interesting we should see what Alton Marshall's widow has to say about this.”

Q: A big timeline of voices on each issue.

Barwick: *[taps on table]* Well these—I don't know. This is obviously just nice that people are writing down some of these things. I'm not giving you a very complete picture. I like to think I'm giving you leads for—

Q: You are. Reading through our last conversation, the list of other names to follow up on is huge. In the amount of just *New York Times* searching that I did post interview was—

Barwick: Maybe if historic preservation insists on being profession like it will soon be, PhD students desperate for a new subject, and so groupsac *[phonetic]* papers will become—

[laughter].

Q: You might not be too far off on that.

Barwick: I'm reading a great book, for the third time I think—that's a great thing about senility, you can read books and then six months later—the *Culture of Complaint: [The Fraying of America]* by Robert Hughes.

Q: I don't know it.

Barwick: It's a great book. He's a great guy. I mean, he's really a disagreeable drunk. He killed somebody in an automobile accident when he was drunk. He's an Australian. Why is he a good writer? I got to admire him because he used to write about—he was an art critic for *Time*. He used to write about [Augustus] Saint-Gaudens—he thought Saint-Gaudens was the greatest American artist. But as an outsider looking at America —this is about early 90's. Boy did he have it pegged. If he were alive today he would—he was beginning to see how the culture wars were driving the country apart. In what context did I bring up Robert Hughes? Who can remember?

Q: Let me look at our—back tracking. I think just other people to start piecing together this larger—

Barwick: [Crosstalk]. Maybe it'll come back who knows.

Along the way, there were all these other activities that went on in Radio City Music Hall. We had—as you know I say we, I was working with people like the MAS and Fred Papert who were—we got the Rockettes to come to dance on the steps of the City Hall. Because the Rockettes—they were going to lose their jobs and so the Rockettes became our allies.

Q: Was this—I looked up—is this the photographic exhibition called *Radio City: Keep it Kicking?* [Laughs]. Was that what I came across? What was that? Was that a part of the City Hall? Or just all part of the whole advocacy effort?

Barwick: I don't know where the exhibition was at MAS or—

Q: Yes, I'll have to figure out where it was. The name is great.

Barwick: It was probably Margot.

Q: That's a good point.

Barwick: An underappreciated person. [Clinking dish]. This is actually good. I'm glad I only took half because I'm having a lunch, I'm had a little breakfast and I'm having it at dinner. You have to—

Q: All of this?

Barwick: I highly recommend—oh I'm taking the rest with me *[laughter]*.

What I think the resolution was, that the hardship case was undermined by the making of money, and the Rockefellers took it back, and everything had second wind. Which is as a general principle—one of the lessons at Radio City Music Hall, other than don't be tempted to go outside of the law, the law is very good very fair to everybody. And a lot of these outside relationships don't work out. You know the—that's what the Penn Central Railroad wanted for Grand Central. Don't designate it but we'll—don't worry you can trust us and we are not going to do anything.

Q: Sure enough.

Barwick: Seconds later, somehow having not made any plans, they had full scaled models, *[laughs]*.

The other lesson I think for historic preservation is that, this was a classic case of whether there really was something that wasn't working. Radio City Music Hall have had run out of gas, despite the Christmas show and Santa and the Rockettes and all that. The revenue was down, it was losing money every year.

The Landmarks Law didn't save Radio City Music Hall but it created the occasion where somebody came in and reprogrammed it and then it found a new life. Any of the elements that were missing—if it haven't been all the publicity and the news hadn't run photographs of the

Rockettes kicking, maybe all those pieces wouldn't have worked. You know, if there hadn't been a lunatic Lieutenant Governor, the slimy assistant, you have to watch before you pick up.

*[Laughter]*.

Q: We'll edit. *[Laughter]*.

Barwick: Maybe it wouldn't—it shows that if you have a deliberative process for dealing with a building, that often a solution can be found.

Q: An economically viable solution.

Barwick: Yes, that's right. It has to be economically viable. If they can't make a return you have to let them tear it down.

Q: That's a really good point, Kent.

Barwick: One of the big takeaways from that experience is that the Rockefellers weren't being tricky. I mean, they weren't—they might have been tough and lawyered up enough to kill you, but they were lying about the loss. The losses are real.

Q: On the subject of interior landmarks, I'm just looking at the kind of composition of the commission at the time. That was when R. Michael Brown was on the commission, who was the first and still only interior designer.

Barwick: Really? Well he was—when interiors had been passed in the law—we talked about the law and all those other elements.

Q: Yes.

Barwick: So the combination of the law having been changed and winning Grand Central case put the people who are on the commission, at that period of time, in very good position. The Supreme Court found that it was valid. R. Michael Brown was really wonderful in organizing, through the ASID, American Society of Interior Designers, a survey of all the interior designers about what were the most important interiors. It was—they had forms, there was a—it was an important chapter I think in the—It was a wonderful piece of work. He was a very likeable guy. Obviously respected in the profession and was able to get all kinds of people to—of course, if you're a interior designer, you're paying attention when you go to such and such a place. So we got this great list and we proceed to designate from that list.

Q: Fabulous.

Barwick: In a way, R. Michael Brown—you never knew what the “R” stood for probably?

Q: Robert?

Barwick: Rafajay [*phonetic*] [*laughter*]. Rapunzel or something, something he was trying to

hide. He was doing for the Landmarks commission in the late '70s when Alan Burham and the MAS and the Society of Architectural Historians, the ASID? No—

Q: SAH?

Barwick: SAH, of course. *[Tapping on table]*. I always left before it's drool time, it's coming.

Q: Hardly, hardly.

Barwick: You know it's unbelievable the things that you don't remember, then happily an hour later, twenty-five minutes later—but then can you name the president of the New York Telephone Company?

Q: You got it *[Laughter]*. You circled back and got it.

Barwick: So you were asking me a question which I was—

Q: No. I've been curious just how—what the impact of actually having an interior designer on the commission was at this moment.

Barwick: He brought a 150 of his friends with him and they—again, I think there was an exhibition. There was certainly a list published. You know today when I'll be online. He's somebody—I ran into him once, he was running like, a fabric shop in Hudson or something so I

don't know if he was living anymore. He'd be a person to—

Q: To add to the list. So I think—

Barwick: So we were able to designate a number of very significant interiors, some extremely well known the others less so—the lobby of the Film [Center] Building and—

Q: I had another question about the theaters when it came to interiors —of course, this just ran out of juice. Because the theaters involve interior landmarking as well, correct?

Barwick: Yes.

Q: What were the interior issues for those?

Barwick: Well, the theater owners were—there were a lot of issues. One of the biggest issues was something that Frank Sanchis was really very useful in addressing. But the theater owners were united in their fierce opposition to the designation of theaters as landmarks, *[laughs]*.

Q: I'm sure.

Barwick: They made the Rockefellers, the worst developers look like pushovers. There were these two guys Bernie and Gerry, Gerry [Gerald] Schoenfeld and Bernie [Bernard B.] Jacobs who were famous, I mean world famous for bullying. Gerry was the one I dealt with the most.

He was a bear—he was connected to everybody—City Hall. He’s extremely impetuous guy. Bernie—there’s a great line about Bernie Jacobs, sort of sums it all up for him: “It’s not enough that I win; somebody else has to lose.” *[Laughs]*.

Q: Ooh, glad he’s not on my—perhaps *[crosstalk]*.

Barwick: I mean, these guys were geniuses of running the Shubert empire. But they were, *[thumps table]*, they really said that. But their big issue other than, you should go away totally we don’t need you, was that theater is a living art and there were starting to be shows that would go in and rip out the interiors and create sort of, super duper environmental experiences. They didn’t want to be restrained from doing that in anyway. They have lots of examples. What Frank did—you see Frank a lot, I’m sure Frank Sanchis?

Q: I actually don’t see him that often.

Barwick: What Frank did and, I’m sure he had collaborators that might have been other architects on the commissions. Frank really worked out these guidelines for how you could—in effect work with the theaters without affecting the original—the thesis was listed, you don’t really need to destroy the proscenium arch, there are other ways to do it. Frank worked through these guidelines, which were adopted by the Landmarks Commission.

Q: Was he—he was at the MAS at the time?

Barwick: No, he was at the Commission.

Q: He was at the Commission.

Barwick: *[Tapping on table]*, exactly his—at one time, I think, was the Executive Director of the commission wasn't he? But at that time he was—I forgot what his title was. I think he came in to run the Façade Improvement Program which was a—*[tapping on table]*. What do they call the federal programs that Beverly was so good at getting? You know, the—

Q: The grant money that she was so good at getting? She was so good at getting the—  
*[crosstalk]*.

Barwick: Beverly was very successful. I'm sure in your interview, you might touch on it, at getting all these resources from HUD. *[Crosstalk]*.

Q: Yes, she talked about that a lot.

Barwick: One of the things she set up—there's this special place in heaven for Beverly, it might not be in the Miss Manner's department, but she got all these programs going, surveys of the outer boroughs, and help for homeowners in the Façade Improvement Program. Frank came to run that and he would give grants to people who were income eligible to fix up the front of their house in Brooklyn neighborhood mostly.

Then Frank did many other things but two in particular were one, working on these theater guidelines—which must have been a nightmare. Then also working on the guidelines for the regulation, or essentially the deregulation of, the shopfront Madison Avenue, which was a key component to be able to designate. Madison Avenue was part of the Upper East Side Historic District.

Q: Kent, do you feel the theater guidelines have worked?

Barwick: I don't know. I think—I mean I don't hear anyone clamoring for their amendment or renewal. I think they're all pretty common sense. Also, we may not be in an era where that sort of—the theaters were these—the historic architectures of the theaters was largely devalued in theater community at that time. It wasn't something anyone thought about and I don't—I am now reflecting on what I think Gerry and Bernie thought. There might have been other people who thought very differently—I am sure there were like Celeste Holm and Brenden Gill. [*Taps on table*]. It would be interesting to go back to the hearings and see who is saying what.

Q: About the special—?

Barwick: Because there was a very—

Q: Maybe I'll look that up—

Barwick: A lot of this went on simultaneously. After the Helen Hayes and Morosco were

demolished, you know what I'm talking about?

Q: Yes.

Barwick: To make way for—they were two of six theaters that were demolished to make way for the Portland Hotel.

Q: There's a wonderful photo of—who was the—not cabaret singer—in *the Rubbles of [unclear]*.

Barwick: Yes, yes.

Q: I'm blanking —see now I'm blanking—

Barwick: I know, isn't that something. Tony used it for his—

Q: For the book.

Barwick: He also used it for the thing—the national press thing. *[Taps on table]*.

Q: Anyway, so the—

Barwick: It'd be interesting to look back and see whose testimony—but after the Helen Hayes

and Morosco were knocked down, with the collusion and encouragement with the Koch administration. Because I just got the work. One of my first—in addition to what everybody was saying that the Landmarks administration be to designate buildings and regulate changes was another whole backstage function. I mean not corporate function but it took hours, we would do it nights, which is to sign off demolitions that were being done with federal money.

There were all these, every night, forty pages of pictures of buildings and mostly in the South Bronx that were about to be demolished. You'd—you put a hold on some of them if you thought they were significant which led to a lot of fights. It wasn't exactly that process. Later, there was an EIS [Environmental Impact Study] being prepared for the Portland Hotel. I thought well this is the shortest job that anyone's ever had. I've been there about two weeks but I had to find that they Helen Hayes and Morosco were eligible for the National Register. That would be the end.  
*[Laughter]*. Clean your desk.

Q: Yes, exactly.

Barwick: In the course of all those struggles there was a group of actors that *[taps on table]*—Joe Papp isn't an actor—but Joe Papp, Tony Randall, Coleen Dewhurst. There were a whole group of people that were standing up trying save their workplaces. There was a young union guy named Jack Goldstein who worked for Actors' Equity, who I always thought would end up head of the Shubert Organization. He had that—he was very good guy, he was very effective, but he had the—I had a dream once that—during one of these days we've just been through. And I was penniless and homeless in Times Square and a big limousine went by, spattered with all this

slush on me. I looked at the backseat and it was Jack Goldstein in a homburg hat and cravat. He was head of the Shubert Empire *[laughter]*. .

He had to be head of the Shubert—I don't know where he is but he did lot of good work. And that of course—in response to that, Herb [Herbert J.] Sturz just decided that, don't worry there wouldn't be any problem transferring development rights of all these theaters. It might take us a week—it might take us a month to figure it out. He said to the board investors, “We'll be back.” And they set up this committee of people in the theater, in real estate. Carried out by Orville Schell who worked out the transfer of the development rights. Of course it was an impossible thing to do and they couldn't do it. So there's a lot theater things even before it sort of evolved into the fight over Times Square. You can see they're related but it's really taking place at slightly different times. It was a major chapter.

Q: I think I always conflate the two, of the theater and the Times Square so I guess—*[crosstalk]*.

Barwick: I think that New York *[crosstalk]* but they were—they were slightly different periods in something. The Portland Hotel was under way when the Koch administration came in. The mishandling of Times Square—the Koch administration waited until Herb Sturz was the—you know there's a whole saga here—western civilization. When Koch came in, Fred Papert and his allies—the Ford Foundation, Lou Davis and Ivan Sherlack *[phonetic]*—had done this plan for the city and Forty-Second Street, which was sort of an entertainment-related group of uses, saving the old theaters and putting new stuff in between them. And there—the funding for that was the Reitmans *[phonetic]*.

But when Koch came in, for reasons related to—*[unclear]* politics, the Reitmans have never been particularly supportive of Zionists causes or Israel. The Reitmans had annoyed Ed. And so Ed was not sensitive—He had good eyes, the guy went to the movies a lot. He was respectful of architecture but he was not knowledgeable really about these things, and he was often taken advantage of by his aids, including Herb. But he announced that this was New York, we needed seltzer not orange juice. He got rid of the city of Forty-Second Street. But basically what they were getting rid off was two things; he really hated the Reitmans and all the former Lindsey people who had done the plans. It was like a who's who of who used to be in the Lindsey administration, including Don Elliot—all people who in their arrogance had ignored Ed, as they ignored everybody *[laughs]*.

Q: And as *[unclear]*, he does not forget anything or anyone.

Barwick: So all these—there are all these complicated chapters of it. Happily the theaters were saved. I don't know what the future Times Square is but at least consciousness was increased—over the idea of the kinds of uses that were going on there, the kind of jobs that were being produced there, tourism as an industry. At that time New York didn't even think of tourism as an industry. Because there were no city *[unclear]*—generations of real estate agents, because the guys were always there *[taps on table]*. Writing checks and demanding, and you know, hurry up. The idea that there were all these—tourism was the second biggest business in Europe, was not—

Q: Fifty-two million last year.

Barwick: Well that's—yes. It wasn't even on the radar screen—for whatever it wasn't. It must have been eighteen million or something. It was just, Huh? There were so many aspects of Times Square that we certainly learned on our way in. I must have—I was back in the MAS when that was going on so—

Q: When the Times Square was going on? Or—

Barwick: Yes, when the George Klein project—what started the Times Square project at least in the popular mind, was the—Herb Sturz had rezoned the east side to take pressure off Madison Avenue, with the collaboration of the MAS. Margot worked very hard on that. Without—and sort of to keep the developers happy, they took all the development rights—they'd taken out the East Side, lumped them over on Columbus Circle, Times Square, and Fifty-Seventh Street. Where you now see them coming into focus.

Q: Oh wow. So that's all the zoning that's currently happening—the debates of Fifty-Seventh Street are all because of that?

Barwick: They're not really debates, they're people wringing their hands over something that the city did at the same time—

Q: For the whole transfer of air rights?

Barwick: No it had to do with, trying to—the strategy was the East Side was fine, it's finished. It doesn't need to be further developed.

Q: Right.

Barwick: We're going to create a big—we want to get everybody to invest in the West Side. We want to make that—those days the dream of the city, I think, was—this is pretty discursive, I'm not sure how you'll make any sense of all this—but what was going out at that time was the growth of the junk bond business. So the financial services industries that have been quietly hanging out in Wall Street for two hundred years, were suddenly in need a lot of space. They all wanted to build, and what better place to build than Times Square. So that the city, partly because they might have believed it, the sort of the center of sex and drugs and all that stuff, and partly because they were manipulating the situation using those fake leaves to get rid of—the city was going to make Times Square Sixth Avenue.

But now there was an aroused theatre community that had sort of come to life on saving the theaters. And then the MAS with its allies, AIA [American Institute of Architects] and others, to its credit was able to simulate further discussions about the future. But we were only two pages ahead in the book. The MAS wasn't any smarter than the city about what the real economic underpinnings were, but we set out to try to find out. A great group of people; Virginia Deshaney [*phonetic*], [*taps on table*], Nicholas Quennell, Tim Prentice, Hugh Hardy. We learned too late about the movie business.

Q: About the movie business?

Barwick: The movie business. Times Square was filled with huge movie theaters, huge movie theaters—not just the ones on Forty-Second Street that were showing X-rated movies, we'll come back to them in a minute. These big palaces and we learned late to save them, that more first run movie tickets were sold in Times Square than all the rest of the city put together.

Q: Wow.

Barwick: Because all the subway lines were coming in, so if you were living in Gowanus, or Jamaica, or 149th street, you have a date and you wanted to do something, get five or six people together [*claps*] you go to Times Square and go to the movies. Now I—

Q: Even as you still have x-rated films going on in other venues, it was still kind of—?

Barwick: Oh no, I'm talking about—again, these were places, some of them—I remember this guy Peter [H.] Elson, his ushers wore white gloves, the popcorn was fresh everyday—we came to that knowledge too late. Because the big theaters, the movie theaters, the city was now, because of the politics of the theater community—Joe Papp being arrested and put in jail—the theaters were being very tender, the City Planning Commission was being very tender about the [*taps on table*] legitimate theaters, but couldn't—just treating the movie theaters as gas stations. They all [*claps*]—bingo. They were all—Radio City Music Hall wasn't exactly part of that, but

it was obviously a big movie theater that did more than movies. But those all from that period of time, those all disappeared.

The pornographic movie business—so we started to look into these things and were learning about the movies too late. We were looking into pornographic movies—*[laughs]* I recall calling a number in LA [Los Angeles] and a cheerful voice answered “Pornographic Movie Film Council. Good morning. How may I direct your call?” Basically what they told us was, I wouldn’t worry about any x-rated movies in Times Square, no one’s going to those theaters, those cassettes have been invented. So, sort of the sales managers from Greenwich who were sneaking into the pornographic movie on the way home were now taking the cassette home and the whole family was watching them *[laughter]*. The pornographic movie business was, in effect, over.

Q: I have never heard that before but that makes total sense when you put into the larger context—*[crosstalk]*

Q: Yes, but why at that moment? They were on their way out one way or another because of the whole change of technology.

Barwick: Well, it was being used by the advocates for dramatic redevelopment. The other thing, which Hugh did an exhibition on, he did an exhibition of building directories. And, you know, I mean by building—

Q: When you walk in the lobby and you see—

Barwick: Yeah. And these were all class B or C—these are really crummy buildings. But what the directory showed was this is where the theater industry was—the guy that replaced the violin bow for the last minute for the night, the two guys with cigars that were always *[taps on table]* playing the piano, and auditioning the girls that sing, the guys that were pirating scripts or movies. The entire theater industry was in this class B, class C office space, in buildings with no particular architectural distinction. But they were—those buildings were being lost. And when the—a lot the of old timers, they would say “Fuck it, we’re going to Florida.” *[Unclear]* script service, just says “We’re out, moving to Miami” *[laughter]*.

The theater industry was being eaten away. You could save the theater, but the real life was in these, this peripheral thing. So we came to have a—not really to have but to share with a broader public what the issues were in terms of Times Square, including that whole movie scene with—*[taps on table]* that Jason Robards narrated? Have you seen it? It was written by Tony Hiess *[phonetic]*.

Q: I don’t know if I’ve seen it.

Barwick: It was cool. It was not—it’s a, I guess you’d say it’s a movie of stills or something, but it was very effective advocacy at the time.

Q: I’ll find it.

Barwick: The reason we had the design competition for Times Square, for property we didn't own, was that—when all this was going on, the most important forces in power, the Governor, the Mayor, and *The New York Times*, were absolutely united their desire to—however you want to put it—clean up Times Square or redevelop Times Square. *The Times* wouldn't cover anything—

Q: How come?

Barwick: Their perspective at the time was that their employees were—had to walk through this vile world of pornographic movies and massage parlors and undesirables on the street and they didn't want that. No sir, it was kind of a—almost an employee. I happened to be sitting behind, in front of Arthur Sulzberger when the—this is later, but I thought interesting. There was a time when, I guess the Democratic National Committee was coming to New York for the convention. And huge set of bleachers was set up in Times Square and a little platform in front of the Times Tower [One Times Square], Judd Hirsch I think was the master of ceremonies.

Q: Cool.

Barwick: All the Democratic people from around the country were there, plus a splattering of New Yorkers. It was a great performance of all the—a lot of show tunes and everything. New York looked good that it was something. And then everybody sang *Give my Regards to Broadway*. I looked behind me and Arthur has almost got tears in his eyes. This is young Arthur

who is a softie. I mentioned a few months ago—I was sitting with him at a dinner—I think he changed his mind that day about what all this was, but up until then they just seen as it as nothing.

Q: Kind of a wasted effort or—?

Barwick: —something to be gotten rid of. The idea of the Times Tower competition—did we already talk about that?

Q: We haven't talked about that.

Barwick: The idea was that since we couldn't get any coverage of anything, we would do this design competition. The NEA gave us the money to do it. Where we would invite the design community all over the world to deal with—they could deal with just the Times Tower if they wanted. The Times Tower was going to be torn down and we said well maybe it shouldn't be torn down. It was sort of the heart of Times Square—balls dropping and all that. So you could just deal with that, or you could deal with Times Square, or you could deal with western civilization. More people entered this competition than any competition except the Vietnam War Memorial from all over the world. Red China—

Q: That's incredible.

Barwick: —from Iceland, it was—so we had millions of boards, all this stuff. We had a great

jury headed by Vartan Gregorian I think. And some really good people on the jury. The whole idea was to have continuing coverage and Goldberger, who hadn't been really allowed to write about everything else had to write about this. The New York Magazine did a twelve-page color spread, so we were able to get a lot of publicity. Also, what it all turned out to be, since we didn't own the property, we couldn't exactly choose a winner. What it did was to give the jury the ability, which they did, to shape a set of policies by which Times Square should be developed. So these were all—all these devices were useful in shaping what became an altered city plan for Times Square.

Q: So what do you think came out of that in terms of the way the jury, or the way public policy was shaped in terms of thinking about that area?

Barwick: I think it remains to be seen whether it was all too late rather than—if Times Square is sort of like a big version of—those terrible cafes that were created in the 80s? All around the country there were these things with cars, *[taps on table]*. It's all fake, there's nothing real. Can't think of the name of these places that were—every American city had one. There's one where the Apple store is now in front of the General Motors building. Hard Rock Cafés, they were called?

Q: Oh, yes.

Barwick: With big cars—

Q: Now I know exactly what you're talking about. Everything then—

Barwick: So Times Square was nothing but—you'll be around to figure it out—nothing but a Hard Rock Café. Then it was an effort that came too late. If—there are people you know who had made it big in Williamsburg or Red Hook, who were now thinking of opening a small theater or review or restaurant in Times Square—if there's some creative continuity in Times Square, then it was all worth it. In the interim it's a huge draw for tourists. And it has a lot of energy—you go there. People thought we were crazy at first. It's sort of like the Grand Canyon of New York. It was its own—

Q: It still is. Yeah.

Barwick: I remember some magazine interviewed me and I was standing you ever see that—  
*[taps on table]*. Who was the great heartthrob actor? *[Taps on table]* Jimmy Dean? James Dean?  
There's a picture of James Dean in his trench coat huddled in Times Square.

Q: With the collar up.

Barwick: All this is before, all this before he's famous. I think it was just seen as this scene of urban decadence. So some magazine got me to pose like that. *[Laughter]*.

Q: I'm going to track this down Kent. *[Laughter]*. Do you have this picture or should I find it?

Barwick: I don't know—*[unclear]*.

Q: I'll find it.

Barwick: It was—I think I'm the only one that thought there might have been a coincidence. I don't think anyone said "Oh, there's James Dean." But there was this idea that this was this environment. We were able—the Japanese got it. One of the first things we did was to have a ribbon cutting for a sign done by one of the Japanese camera companies—Cannon I think. They sent about thirty guys from Tokyo to be there for the ribbon cutting. Of course, if you laid all the neon in that sign end to end it would go to San Francisco and back to Chicago. We began to, sort of milk the situation for opportunities to engage the public.

I don't know what the takeaway—the takeaway is that the city of New York is particularly dumb about understanding its own economy. You see this in the way we treated industry, the way we treated the arts for a long time. In my short life time, I remember when nobody cared a bit about the arts, and then in the fight over SoHo, with people like Marty Freedman—no, Marty Siegel. And the Port Authority study that Rosemary *[taps on table]*—a person who's first name might be Rosemary did. The economic value of the artists being added, being on the table. So the artists were no longer seen as undesirable, they were seen as valuable in terms of sales tax dollars. I can't remember what it was *[unclear]*, Port Authority. This has certainly gotten discursive hasn't it? I don't know what you're going to make of all these things.

Q: I think this is so relevant Kent. Personally I think what you just raised about Times Square

and thinking about the economics of the place—the fact that the value of the movie theaters wasn't recognized. To me I think that's so interesting of thinking about preservation today of how do you—how as a preservationist do you deal with economics, or start to think about the city, not just in individual buildings, or even necessarily architectural districts, but how do you think of them for these larger uses and industry wide things? What's kind of the takeaway of the Times Square lesson for us today?

Barwick: The other thing we learned was that there were more unskilled jobs at Times Square than there were anywhere else in town. Because all those—the chambermaids, the busboys, the cooks, the parking lot attendants. A whole world that can't get a job working sadly, was working there.

Q: I guess I'm just thinking about the field moving forward. Maybe this is jumping slightly—

Barwick: You know my view is that preservation is not a profession. I think it's an epic that shouldn't warp other professions. It's not to say that there shouldn't be people who are terrific specialists in working with historic buildings. But I think the training should be brought—I think the preservation world shouldn't improve it's corner, it should infiltrate the planning and economic analysis, the architecture, the business school, so that it takes up the world rather than—

Q: I agree.

Barwick: I don't know enough about the curriculum as it's developed. I think—It's not fair to say I think it may be in the corner, as I just don't know. But I've been an employer of a lot of the Columbia graduate program and met some of the loveliest people I've ever known and some of the most capable. But I can't improve on my idea that it shouldn't—

[INTERRUPTION]

Barwick: I'm not—unlike calling Bob Dryfoss slimey, I'm happy to be recorded forever in thinking that. I think it's not just being able to work with planners and people who do economic development for developers or public policy, I think it's being those people.

Q: Yes, I think you're right.

Barwick: I think there's nothing that Vishaan [Chakrabarti] can do that—*[laughter]*.

Q: He can do everything.

Barwick: That someone *[unclear]*. And that program should be—well I can't improve what [James Marston] Fitch, created the people that manage—what is it, Curatorial Program for the Built World?

Q: Curatorial Management for the Built World.

Barwick: Well come on. That's got to be more than knowing the orders. *[Laughs]*.

Q: I was re-reading Fitch recently and I was just looking at the chapter headers in the book, the Curatorial Management book, and it's amazing. They're the most relevant chapter headers. It's all about climate control, and all of these issues that are so much broader than what we, I think have come to define as preservation. You could just take his book and use all those chapter headers, have an individual class in each of those—economic development. Everything that's in there I think encompasses the way—the connectivity.

Barwick: I would think than an ambition from a place like Columbia—I realize this is tied to all kinds of tricky issues relating to whoever the Dean is. I don't think any architect should get out of Columbia without being versed in historic preservation in some level. And I don't think any planner should. And I don't think any, whatever Vishaan's program is called. What's it?

Q: CURE. It's CURE. Center for Urban Real Estate.

Barwick: Yes, The Center for Urban Real Estate seems to be the hot program everyone wants to be in.

Q: It is.

Barwick: Presumably *[unclear]* it's the new black. *[Laughter]*. Those programs shouldn't be infiltrated.

Q: I think so too. So—

Barwick: So you have a candidate for Mark Quigley's job? Hurry up and get it and we'll find someone else to do this *[laughs]*.

Q: Oh great. Thanks Kent. And to bring the boat from Detroit.

Let me see what time it is.

Barwick: We're twenty minutes away from when I—I begged someone to have lunch with me to talk about the Seaport. I can't—I changed it eleven times.

Q: You did? That is my current—about Seaport City or about everything else that's going on?

Barwick: All the other things that are going on with the Seaport. Are you interested?

Q: Ok. I'm so interested. Yes, Kent. Not that I need another project, but I'm so fascinated by the Seaport, and kind of infuriated about what I've heard about Seaport City, which is that it doesn't seem like it can go anywhere.

Barwick: Well Seaport City—let's hope that—

Q: There must have been a lot of money wasted in planning of Seaport City. Because I was at a cocktail party and bumped into a planner who's being paid by the city to do some environmental impact study. The fact in my mind that it was that far along, and that there was clearly this big team being paid to research the feasibility and to start on those studies, it's unbelievable.

Barwick: Well I don't know anymore about—what we're trying to do now is trace back to what happened. How did the leases go from a situation where the Seaport had the lease hold on the entire property—all the property, the piers, with having Rouse as it's subtenant—to a situation where Howard Hughes is pushing the Seaport to turn over the property and Skirball [*phonetic*] rode him down. So it's been a whole set of—and beginning to understand more about what happened. It's not always evil, sometimes it's just stupid.

Q: You, I feel, have always been an outside the box thinker about what you can designate, whether it's the street grid patterns or other things along those lines. But thinking about the Seaport—and this is somewhat off topic—but the idea of the waterfront, of preserving the waterfront. Do you think there's any possibility or potential to landmark the waterfront? To landmark either—

Barwick: Is there—I'm embarrassed not to know, but is the—the city has the right to control up to the pierhead line—

Q: Yes. I should look at the maps to see what it is.

Barwick: —so it certainly controls—but I don't know what the designation is of the national registered district or the local historic district. But certainly there's no legal reason why—I mean you'd have to say what would you—we certainly regulated the design of the building by Benjamin Thompson on Pier 17. You know, the one that's being torn down now, the red shed that says Pier 17 on it. That was subject to landmarks review.

Q: And that was under—you were commissioner when all that was going on. Is there a story there?

Barwick: I was. It was very speedily—the commission—there were some really wonderful people on the Landmarks Commission when I was there, some of whom you know. Like Eliot Willensky, Tony Tung, Bill Conklin, Mary Black, *[taps on table]*, Charles Platt, you know they were—They thought that the Benjamin Thompson design was perfect. It was a big pier shed, looked like pier sheds, it wasn't particularly—going to be a historic building but it seemed very comfortable on the New York City waterfront. It was very speedily approved.

We didn't have speedy approvals because we had these really incredibly brilliant design critics in Conklin and Elliott and Tony. Tony was particularly impossible, generally right, who would—We had three meetings to talk about the mutins. And I'm not putting it down, they knew what they were doing, they were good. So this was—I don't think there was any project every approved more rapidly than that building that's now getting torn down, *[laughs]*.

Q: I know, less than thirty years later.

Barwick: I don't remember *[unclear]*. I don't want to get into the Bloomberg administration. Maybe we'll look back in a couple of years and wish that they were there.

Q: We possibly might.

Barwick: After Commissioner Ronda Wist, *[laughter]*.

Q: We shall see. Is that your prediction?

Barwick: Well, I'm worried that—she's not a bad person, she's a very smart person. Sometimes people will rise to the occasion. I'm just thinking while Carl was running the search—

Q: And now he's planning.

Barwick: He wants to be in charge of things. His cousin Jennifer is supporting—Jennifer Raab is Carl's cousin.

Q: You're kidding. I did not know that.

Barwick: And Jennifer's supporting Ronda. You can just hear Jennifer saying "Don't worry she won't be any problem." *[Laughs]*.

Q: Yeah. I interviewed Jennifer.

Barwick: [*Crosstalk*—somebody else.

Q: Fabulous.

Barwick: Spend a lot of time negotiating. Okay, we better pick up the pace. I'm really sorry.

Q: No. I'm kind of debating on whether launch in on some of the other more intricate questions of the issues like Rizzoli Coty, or whether it's best if I type up a list of all the cases that I wanted to send you this, basically of what we haven't covered.

Barwick: We have fourteen minutes. Do you have a short one?

Q: Well this is something. One question that I've been thinking when you were talking about Koch at the beginning, of Koch in writing the letter and saying, it's your purview, do what you want. I'm not going to interfere. When you—?

Barwick: But if I don't agree I'm going to get rid of you, [*laughs*].

Q: But if I don't agree I'm going to get rid of you, [*laughter*]. He didn't get rid of you, you chose to leave, but you chose to leave before the parking bureau, or around the time of the parking bureau scandal.

Barwick: Unrelated.

Q: So totally unrelated. I guess my question is, was there a switch in Koch's dealings with the Landmark when he was under pressure from all of these other issues that were happening in the administration?

Barwick: I think there was but I only know—and I think it wasn't related to—well maybe it was in relation to the Parking Violations Bureau. I think there was a changing of guard at City Hall. First of all, when I was a young commissioner I used to go over to City Hall to shop around for my boss. I would—

Q: For your Deputy Mayor?

Barwick: Yes. So I would drag some poor Deputy Mayor into a meeting and describe to him what I planning to do. And you could see that—well, be nice. But I finally figured out well wait a minute, I don't have a boss, *[laughs]*.

Q: So there was no one Deputy Mayor that you felt that you had to report to?

Barwick: No. But the one I had—there were two Deputy—over time there were two that were really extremely important. One was Bobby Wagner, and one was Nat Leventhal. Bobby was the head of the planning commission before being—and Bobby was the consummate politician.

Bobby knew more about politics than anybody I've ever met. You could give him an address, 140 [unclear] Avenue in East New York, and he would say that's Duke's Club. I remember once being at a dinner party, small dinner party. June and I were there with a couple of friends, Ed Koch and Bobby. And Koch was focused on running for mayor—for Governor. I said, just for something to say, only about six or eight of us around the table, "Gee, I wonder how Governor Lehman did in Utica"—Lehman being Jewish. Bobby said, "Well the twelfth ward he did 14,000 to 700, and the fifteenth ward was"—like an encyclopedia. He was raised by his father and grandfather to be—it's not a world he wanted. I think he would have been a great university, would have been a great teacher. He was a heavy smoker. And he was often somebody that I dealt with but we dealt as friends. We had been friends beforehand. Not close friends, but friends. He was respectful and thoughtful. I wasn't too ambitious once. I was trying both on the Upper East Side.

Q: You were too ambitious, you said?

Barwick: No, at the time when I was doing the—I, when I say we, a lot of allies—doing the Upper East Side, which was a protracted fight—stalling for a year so that Herb Sturz can catch up with the special zoning program so there wouldn't be a perception that the Landmarks Commission is doing the work of the Planning Commission. It's always been in underlining themes in real estate boards is that these are back door zoning guys and they're taking—So we had to stop for a year while Herb kept—

I was also trying to help Mr. Capalino, who was then the commissioner for the Housekeeping

Agency. DGS, Department of General Services. The City's *[unclear]*. I wanted to do a City Hall Historic District to take in the Woolworth building. There was a little bit of misinformation. Dorothy and Lenore came back from some meeting with the Woolworth people with the idea that they were very resentful that they were going to be treated differently than other people. They might feel differently about a historic district. Which was full of shit. But I thought it was—

Q: Just because it was both involving city buildings, and also just the financial pressures of that area?

Barwick: Their attitude or my goal?

Q: I guess kind of why there was so much pushback—why it was so difficult for the idea of a City Hall Historic District to—?

Barwick: Well first of all very difficult historically. In Lower Manhattan there were no designations. It was pretty clear—*[unclear]* the Downtown Lower Manhattan Association, which was sort of a spiritual parent of the Alliance for Downtown. There was a guy that ran it named Justin Murphy—there were no people living downtown. It's pretty hard for people to remember that. Zero. No person slept overnight in lower Manhattan for a long, long time. In those days it was pretty clear that there was a prohibition against designation of landmarks south of Fulton street on the east side of, maybe Chambers. There was kind of a mental bat, this is—don't fuck around here.

Q: And it was just one of those unspoken things because of—given real estate pressure?

Barwick: Justin Murphy was a guy who spoke. He was close friends with everybody. He was an affable big Irish guy representing the downtown interests and didn't want—they had—the Customs House was designated, and the Seaport and that's plenty—City Hall, that's plenty. Don't spend a lot of time down here and don't expect any help. Because since there was no local population the Borough President would be responsive to the business interests. And the Borough President—the way of the dynamic of the Board of Estimate worked was that the five borough presidents voted together, by contract, no matter what they thought. That gave them ten. That was enough to stop—they had two votes each—that was enough to stop the mayor and the city agency that was doing something. The borough president had more power in that dynamic.

I just thought if you can't designate the Woolworth building—and also, you got this fabulous setting around City Hall Park and you had all these—and Capalino was interested because he had all these once beautiful but broken down buildings that the city owned, like the—a woman, Margot Gayles, the old—where the Old Sun Clock was, Modell's, *[unclear]*, the old New York Life building. All those buildings on the north side of Chambers street were owned by the city. The wonderful building, I guess it's 51 Chambers [St.], the H-shaped building by Amerol *[phonetic]*. These were fabulous buildings, but they were just absolutely—well people were being raped in the women's rooms, really worth your life to go to the bathroom in a city owned office building filled by city employees. They were horrible. So all this was in my mind, and Capalino's a way to sort of make something out of this area and get it refurbished.

My approach had been with Bobby is I would go over and brief him and tell him things. They thought it was a mistake to do two things at once, to be doing the Upper East Side. I had dragged them into a nightmare. It was the right thing to do but you can imagine the pressure. There were New York Times editorials, op-ed pieces, the Real Estate Board was going nuts. They claimed there was no reason to designate anything past then, it was all rent controlled buildings. We did a study. All the rent controlled tenants had already been evicted, *[laughs]*.

Q: Oh really?

Barwick: Yes. I mean, *[unclear]*, besides that—of course I'm only seeing part of it. They already knew that I wasn't sympathetic. You can imagine the calls that Bobby and Nat Leventhal—however, to answer your question forty minutes ago, the people who succeeded Bob Wagner and Nat Leventhal were not as able to influence Koch. They were people who did more of his bidding, or were impatient most of the time—you had Coffee, A guy named Bob Esnard, I think a local guy. So I think Gene Norman had a completely different experience.

Q: With Deputy Mayors who were just more involved in—?

Barwick: Yes. Some of them—*[crosstalk]*, all the time I'm sure. And Esnard was always—there was a whole, trying to undercut *[unclear]*. The Real estate board decided that Landmarks Commission had to hurry up and designate or identify what they were going to designate. There was a thing called the Cooper Commission, which I was on. There were all these things, which

were thrust upon Gene, including the whole library thing where he was sort of under pressure to do something. The preservation community was furious with Gene for knuckling under on the Bryant Park stuff. It was a very different world for Gene.

I said a lot about Bobby's knowledge. He supported for instance—he understood these things as an intellectual. I gave him, wasn't mine to give him it belonged to the landmarks commission, but I gave it to Bobby who was head of the Planning Commission—and I hope it's still in the office of the Planning Commissioner—the map of Lower Manhattan with the Dutch streets. He said, "We're going to save them, we're going to designate those streets" because if you don't you're going to lose the way that every—Did we already talked about this earlier in the other session? Every piece of property in lower Manhattan, because it's not, the lots aren't rectangular, was a made in heaven BSA [Board of Standards and Appeals] case.

Q: How come?

Barwick: Because it's an irregular lot.

Q: Got it.

Barwick: Everybody in Lower Manhattan just couldn't wait to get rid of all these ridiculous streets, Pave them, create mega blocks. We got it—I felt very supported most of the time in the case of the Woolworth thing. I didn't realize until Kevin Lynch called me one day from Boston and told me that he'd just been hired by a firm, he and—who's the guy from Chicago? John

Costonis. He and John Costonis had just been hired to do a report that said there was nothing worth designating in the City Hall area. A lot of money was being poured into this. We were discouraged from continuing it, not on the grounds that there wasn't something there, but the grounds that you have a two front war.

Okay. That concludes our—

Q: Thank you Mr. Barwick.

[END OF INTERVIEW]