

Action to Save Landmarks

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tailored for New York's needs and has the backing of the Mayor. It should be made effective promptly, without debilitating compromise.

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The landmarks legislation waiting to be made into city law has been carefully drawn up over the last two years. It has been checked and rechecked for soundness, fairness and enforceability; studied by experts, evaluated critically by city departments, returned to the Corporation Counsel's office for revisions and adjustments to make it even more balanced and foolproof, and re-circulated for formal approval. More precautions could not have been taken if it were to be launched to the moon.

It will be launched, however, in the usual atmosphere of democratic controversy at public hearings while the Board of Estimate and City Council consider the bill. In the inevitable confusion, several points deserve remembrance.

Relatively small amounts of property are involved; and provision is made for just compensation to the owner, who can reject the city's proposals if he considers them a hardship. Precedent and experience in other cities went into the formulation of this bill. So did the most objective and expert advice obtainable. Controversy must not lead to changes that will turn it into a poor or worthless version of its present well-considered form.

New York's landmarks legislation is no wild-eyed dream of doddering sentimentalists; it is a practical, necessary and equitable means of preserving important civic values. It is expertly