



Soon to be largest deliberately demolished tower ever, 270 Park Avenue proposal faces backlash

THU, FEBRUARY 22, 2018 BY DEVIN GANNON

Plans to replace JPMorgan Chase's current headquarters at 270 Park Avenue with a much taller tower at the same site is facing opposition from architecture and preservation buffs, shortly after the [proposal was announced](#). Not only will the project become the largest intentionally demolished building in history, as [YIMBY](#) reported, the landmark-worthy Union Carbide Building was also designed in 1960 by [Natalie de Blois](#), a pioneer of American architecture and one of the few female senior designers at that time. As the first project under the Midtown East rezoning, JPMorgan Chase's existing 700-foot tall structure will be bulldozed to make way for a tower that will most likely be over 1,200 feet tall.

As a senior designer and associate partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, de Blois is credited with the design of many of the firm's post-war buildings. Totaling 52 stories and 1.5 million square feet, the Union Carbide headquarters was one of her largest projects, and one of the biggest building erected in New York since before World War II.

Because 270 Park Ave was never designated as a city landmark, it has no protections from demolition. The Landmarks Preservation Commission told [Curbed NY](#): "Prior to the rezoning, the Commission evaluated many buildings in the district including this one. As a result, we prioritized and designated 12 iconic buildings as individual landmarks, but JPMorgan Chase building was not among them."

The East Midtown Rezoning plan, approved by the City Council in August, affects 78 blocks around Grand Central, making way for 6.5 million square feet of modern office space and taller buildings. JPMorgan Chase's new building, expected to measure 2.5 million square feet, will have enough room for about 15,000 employees, compared to the old building's capacity of just 3,500 employees.

The rezoning allows landmarks, like St. Patrick's Cathedral, to sell and transfer unused development rights in the rezoned area, with the seller of the air rights required to pay the city a minimum of \$61.49 per square foot.

Although the project will be subject to "various approvals," critics quickly responded on Twitter to the mayor and JPMorgan's joint announcement.

Twitter



Paul Goldberger @paulgoldberger

I am speechless: under the radar, JPMorganChase develops a plan to demolish SOM's UnionCarbide, a deserving 1960's landmark, and build new. Most postwar ParkAve is junk, and they want to demolish one of its greatest bldgs bc new zoning allows bigger <https://nyti.ms/2BGKfso>

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Ariel Aufgang, the principal at Aufgang Architects, a firm known for its adaptive reuse practices, told 6sqft: "Midtown Manhattan has never before experienced a project of this size and complexity, which will have a profound, long term impact, not just on the City, but, because of its proximity to Grand Central, will have a regional effect in Westchester and Connecticut."

While JPMorgan Chase has not officially selected a developer for the project, sources told Politico New York on Thursday that Tishman Speyer will likely take the helm. If approved, the new tower is expected to be completed in about five years.