

Landmarks Preservation Commission  
April 12, 2016, Designation List 488  
LP-1653

**Pepsi-Cola Sign**, 4-09 47<sup>th</sup> Road, Long Island City, Queens.  
Built: 1940; General Outdoor Advertising Company, Manufacturer. Restored: 1993; Artkraft  
Strauss Sign Corporation, Manufacturer. Permanently Relocated: 2009.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens, Tax Map Block 21, Lot 120

On April 19, 1988, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Pepsi Cola Sign and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 2). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with provisions of law. Two people testified against designation, one from the Society for the Architecture of the City and Queens Deputy Borough President. A third speaker testified neither for or against the sign. The owner's attorney requested a continuance. The public hearing was continued on July 12, 1988. One speaker, from the Queensborough Preservation League, testified in favor of designation. The Chair noted opposition from Queens Borough President's office. A representative of Lord, Day, & Lord requested that the record be kept open; the record was left open for one month.

On October 8, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of Pepsi Cola Sign and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. III—Borough of Queens Group, B). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. The owner spoke in opposition to designation. Ten people spoke in favor of designation, including State Senator Tony Avella, The Queens Borough Historian, and representatives from the Queens Preservation Council, the Historic District Council, the Municipal Art Society, the Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. A representative of the Society for the Architecture of the City spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission also received written submissions expressing support for designation from individuals associated with Aquinas Society and the Society for Commercial Archaeology and from one individual who opposed designation.<sup>1</sup>



## Summary

One of the best known features of the New York City waterfront, the Pepsi-Cola Sign has become an iconic piece of the urban landscape, representing commercial advertising and American industry. The Pepsi-Cola Sign was constructed in 1940 and erected on the roof of the Pepsi-Cola bottling facility in Long Island City. Contemporary accounts attribute the sign to the General Outdoor Advertising Company, one of the largest advertising companies of its time. At the time of its construction, the Pepsi-Cola Sign was the longest electric sign in New York State. Situated on the edge of the East River, the sign was clearly visible from Manhattan's East Side and the recently completed FDR. The sign's design closely reflects the company's 1939 trademark logo with red neon tubing incorporated around the edges of the letters. The 50-foot painted Pepsi bottle was probably replaced in the 1970s with an updated bottle featuring the company's contemporary design. In 1993, the 53-year-old sign was rebuilt due to significant deterioration. Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, a company that produced some of the most memorable Times Square spectacles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, oversaw the work, and the sign was restored in a manner that was in keeping with the design, colors, and details of the original sign. In 2003, Pepsi sold their facility to the Queens West Development Corporation. The Pepsi-Cola bottling facility was demolished and the sign was temporally relocated. Today, the sign stands within feet of its original location inside Gantry Plaza State Park. Changes to the zoning code, in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, have contributed to a reduction in the number of large illuminated signs, which once crowned the factories and warehouses of many of Long Island City's most prominent companies. The Pepsi-Cola Sign remains one of the most conspicuous features on the New York waterfront and serves as a reminder of Long Island City's industrial past.

## **DESCRIPTION**

### Structure

The below grade structure consists of 40 piles driven into the bedrock with four, five-foot concrete pile caps. Mounted onto the pile caps are eight vertical steel torque tubes. Two torque tubes running horizontally, in parallel, on top of the vertical supports provide the support for the grid structure. The grid structure is 49 feet high and 150 feet long and is constructed of "L" angle rail. It is supported by trusses spaced evenly along the approximately 150-foot span.

### Trademark Logo

The Pepsi-Cola trademark logo consists of the words "Pepsi" and "Cola" separated by a colon. The bottom of the letters begin 20 feet above ground level with the largest letters terminating at almost 70 feet. The letters are made of aluminum with a baked Pepsi-Cola red finish. 15mm clear red neon tubing surrounds their edges. The letters contain interior steel frames that provide anchorage to the grid structure. The words "TRADE MARK REG. U.S. Pat. Off." are in white type on a black background below the trademark logo.

### Pepsi Bottle

The 50-foot aluminum Pepsi bottle is painted to closely resemble a 1970s glass Pepsi bottle.<sup>2</sup> The bottle has clear red neon tubing around its edges.

## HISTORY

### The Industrial Development of Long Island City<sup>3</sup>

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, New York City was the nation's leading commercial center, but massive population growth meant that the island of Manhattan had largely reached its capacity to house industrial sites. Large tracts of inexpensive land, located just a short distance away within easy accesses of important waterways, made Long Island City a desirable alternative. Beginning in the 1870s, large oil refineries, lumber yards, and factories for asphalt, ceramic pipe, barrels, tin ware, and glass, as well as chemical and gas plants lined the shoreline from Hunter's Point to Astoria, attracted by the proximity of the docks and the area's growing network of railroad arteries. Long Island City benefited not only from its proximity to Manhattan and the East River, but also Newtown Creek, a tidal arm of the East River, which was for a time "the busiest waterway of its size in the world" and rivaled the Mississippi in the amount of freight it carried.<sup>4</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, additional transportation improvements such as the Queensboro Bridge (1909), Queens Boulevard (1910), the IRT elevated subway (1917), and the Triborough Bridge (1936) helped transform Long Island City into a center for industry. In 1912, Long Island City was home to nearly 300 manufacturing facilities with more than 16,000 employees and by the late 1920s, Long Island City was the 14<sup>th</sup> largest industrial area in the United States. Leading industries included sheet iron, automobiles, oil, silk goods, and metal work. Notable firms operating factories in Long Island City included Sunshine Biscuit, Steinway, Ronzoni, and Chiclets.

### The Early History of Pepsi-Cola and the Construction of the Pepsi-Cola Sign<sup>5</sup>

Carbonated beverages were enjoyed for over a century before pharmacist Caleb D. Bradham (d. 1934) began experimenting with his own soda drinks at his drugstore in New Bern, North Carolina. Drugstores were places where people met and socialized and Caleb sought to create a drink that was "good tasting, healthful and refreshing." His most popular formula, which combined sugar, water, caramel, lemon oil, nutmeg and other natural additives, was originally known as Brad's Drink. In 1898, Bradham renamed the drink Pepsi-Cola after the enzyme pepsin because it was believed that, like pepsin, the drink aided in the digestive process. By 1902, increasing demand from surrounding drugstores led Bradham to file incorporation papers for the Pepsi-Cola Company, and he moved his operations from his drugstore basement to a factory building. The original trademark application was filed with the U.S. Patent Office that same year. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, new improvements in the manufacturing of glass bottles that prevented beverages from losing their carbonation allowed Pepsi-Cola to expand from purely a fountain beverage. In 1905, the Pepsi-Cola company began licensing bottlers in North Carolina and by 1909 the Pepsi franchise had expanded to more than 250 bottlers in 24 states. During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pepsi-Cola was marketed as a refreshing, restorative drink and by 1910 it had become a household name. While syrup sales initially soared, sugar rationing during

World War I and the subsequent spike in sugar prices after the war led the Pepsi-Cola Company to declare bankruptcy in 1923. The company and the Pepsi trademark were sold several times before undergoing bankruptcy again in 1931. In 1931, the candy company Loft, Inc. acquired the National Pepsi-Cola Company under the direction of the president Charles G. Guth. The fortunes of the Pepsi-Cola changed dramatically in 1934 when Pepsi-Cola began selling its 12-ounce drink for five cents, the same price as Coca-Cola's 6-ounce bottle. The savings proved irresistible to consumers who were suffering under the Great Depression and sales of Pepsi Cola skyrocketed.

Prior to July 1934, Pepsi's bottling operations in New York City were fulfilled through a contract with the Mavis Bottling Company at Mavis' 33<sup>rd</sup> Street plant in Long Island City. Seeing the potential to make a profit in the bottling of Pepsi, in July 1934, Guth discontinued Pepsi's contract with the Mavis Bottling Company and began leasing their plant at 47-51 33<sup>rd</sup> Street. One year later in July 1935, Guth purchased the building outright and decided to move the entire Pepsi-Cola operation into it, including the executive offices. Increasing demand and the desire for more impressive facilities led Guth to purchase three parcels of land on the East River just north of Hunters Point from the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company in November 1937.<sup>6</sup> The site's advantages included direct access to docks, an enormous plant ready for immediate use, and vast outdoor yardage that could be used for maneuvering and storing trucks. In addition to bottling, the new site was used for sugar refining and had a printing department for producing labels and advertising products.

In 1940, Pepsi-Cola decided to enlarge and update the plant in order to meet increasing demand in the New York City metropolitan area.<sup>7</sup> In August, the Pepsi-Cola Sign was erected on top of one of the facility's buildings. The sign was comprised of four main elements, the Pepsi-Cola trademark outlined in neon red, the "5c" price of a 12-ounce bottle of Pepsi-Cola advertised in neon blue, a 50-foot replica of a Pepsi-Cola bottle, and the steel structure upon which the advertisement was attached. At the time of its construction, the sign was described as the longest electrical sign in New York.<sup>8</sup>

#### The Manufacturer: General Outdoor Advertising Company

The General Outdoor Advertising Company was incorporated on February 7, 1925. The company emerged as the result of a merger between the Thomas Cusask Company, a large outdoor advertising company founded in 1875 that operated in 41 states, and the Fulton Group, a group of 20 affiliated companies that operated in 602 cities and towns. The General Outdoor Advertising Company specialized in outdoor advertising including poster panels, painted bulletins, and electrical bulletins.<sup>9</sup> The company operated many of the outdoor advertising displays in the Times Square area and created signs such as the 1936 Wrigley's spectacular featuring neon fish.<sup>10</sup> In 1940, the corporation and its subsidiaries had advertising display plants in more than 30 states and 2,200 employees. It sold its services through local corporation salesmen in 41 cities.<sup>11</sup> The company was the first to develop the Streamliner bulletin structure and produce animated cutouts on billboards.<sup>12</sup> In 1962, Gamble-Skogmo, a conglomerate of

retail chains and other businesses bought control of the General Outdoor Advertising Company. A year and a half later the two companies merged and all but two of General Outdoor's plants were sold.<sup>13</sup>

### Neon Signs<sup>14</sup>

The precursors to electric signs were gas-lit displays, which existed at least as far back as 1840. The first electric sign was built with incandescent bulbs for the 1882 International Electrical Exposition in London and featured the word "EDISON." The value of electric signs was quickly recognized, particularly their ability to reach prospective customers at night. By 1906, there were 75,000 electric signs throughout the United States.

Neon was first discovered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, it was the inventor Georges Claude's discovery of a corrosion resistant electrode, which he patented in 1915, that was the single most important breakthrough and allowed neon to become commercially viable. In simplest terms, neon light is produced by a modest electric voltage applied to the electrodes at the ends of a glass tube containing an inert gas such as neon, which causes it to glow. Claude also conceived the idea of bending tubes into shapes, which allowed for the production of letters. The first neon sign in the United States was imported from Paris in 1922 for Packard Agency in Los Angeles. In 1924, Georges Claude came to the United States and opened an office in New York. He entered into a franchise agreement with Strauss Signs and together they created the first American neon spectacular at 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway. Neon signs were particularly suited to outdoor advertising because unlike incandescent bulbs, they were visible even in daylight. As a result, they quickly became a popular fixture in outdoor advertising throughout the country.

Initially, a limiting factor in neon lighting was that it could only produce the colors red and blue: red being the color that results naturally from electricity being applied to neon gas and blue the result of adding a drop of mercury to the gas. The demand for a greater array of colors led to the production of fluorescent tubes in commercial signage, the first of which were commercially produced in 1934. Further innovations during World War II led to the use of colored translucent plastics, particularly acrylics, in outdoor electric signs. Fluorescent-lighted plastics required less maintenance and did not require the specialized skills associated with the production of neon tubes. The new technology eventually led to the demise of neon, which probably reached its peak in the late 1940s.

### Rooftop Electric Signs in Long Island City<sup>15</sup>

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century large electric signs were installed on top of many of Long Island City's industrial buildings including the Swingline Staplers sign at 32-07 VanDam Street, the Breyers Ice Cream sign at 34-09 Queens Blvd., the Sunshine Biscuit sign at 29-10 Thomson Ave., and the Chiclets sign at 30-30 Thomson Ave. The signs were an effective way for companies to advertise the goods they produced and their presence in the neighborhood. They were carefully placed within view of heavily trafficked areas such as the elevated subway,

the Long Island Railroad, Queen's Plaza, and Manhattan, becoming an integral part of Long Island City's skyline.

In New York City, opposition to unfettered outdoor advertising began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup> In response, various zoning resolutions were passed that progressively restricted the location, size, and height of outdoor advertising.<sup>17</sup> The first major change came in 1916. The 1916 Zoning Resolution prohibited commercial signage in residential districts.<sup>18</sup> Later changes to the zoning code targeted signage in manufacturing districts including limiting the maximum size of an illuminated sign to 500 square feet and prohibiting them from extending more than 40 feet above curb level.<sup>19</sup> These changes, along with the departure of many large manufacturers, have curtailed the number of large illuminated signs in Long Island City and made the handful of grandfathered electric signs, like the Pepsi-Cola Sign, rare survivors.

### Design

Throughout its history Pepsi's trademark logo has undergone numerous changes. Pepsi's original logo is believed to have been designed by a local North Carolinian artist in 1898, although it was never publicly used on the company's products or in its marketing. By 1909, the company's logo had evolved to closely resemble its appearance on the Pepsi-Cola Sign. The 1909 design, however, included the words "drink" and "delicious-healthy." In 1939, these words were dropped from the logo and a thick blue line was added around the edges of the letters.<sup>20</sup>

The design of the Pepsi-Cola Sign most closely resembles the 1939 trademark logo and the blue outline likely played a role in the decision to outline the letters with neon tubing. The blue line was removed when Pepsi heavily modified the logo the following year, in 1940, which may have contributed to Pepsi's decision to use red versus blue neon tubing.<sup>21</sup>

The five cent advertisement, which was originally in neon blue on the Pepsi-Cola Sign, reflected Pepsi-Cola's 1930s marketing campaign during which time it sold its 12-ounce drink for five cents, the same price as Coca-Cola's 6-ounce bottle. The nickel era of Pepsi-Cola came to an end just after WWII when the country experienced a period of high inflation.<sup>22</sup> The "5c" was subsequently removed from the Pepsi-Cola Sign.

The 50-foot Pepsi-Cola bottle was originally a painted replica of a 1930s glass Pepsi-Cola bottle. For unknown reasons, the bottle was replaced probably in the 1970s with a bottle featuring a contemporary design.<sup>23</sup>

### Restoration of the Pepsi-Cola Sign and the Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation<sup>24</sup>

In 1993, PepsiCo hired Artkraft Strauss Sign Company to restore the Pepsi-Cola Sign. An examination of the sign revealed that the sign was in extremely poor condition due to extensive corrosion. A decision was made to replicate the sign.<sup>25</sup> Due to the sign's calendared status, the plans and specifications to recreate the historic sign were reviewed and approved by the staff of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The new sign was fabricated in aluminum and was identical to the old sign in terms of its design, colors, details, and lighting.<sup>26</sup> The only notable

departure from the previous sign appears to have been the addition of clear red neon tubing along the edge of the Pepsi bottle. In order to include an electrical cabinet, the depth of the Pepsi bottle was increased from 5 to 9 ½ inches bringing it to almost the same plane as the letters.<sup>27</sup> The sign's metal structure was retained and restored.<sup>28</sup>

The Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation began as a small sign-painting operation in 1897 under the name of Strauss Signs. By the 1920s, the company had emerged as the principal producer of theater marquees on Broadway. In 1929, a former Strauss employee purchased the Artkraft Company of Lima, Ohio, which had established a hugely successful business crafting porcelain enamel and neon signs. In 1932, the two companies merged to become Artkraft Strauss. In the postwar decades, Artkraft Strauss overtook the General Outdoor Advertising Company as the dominant force in Times Square, creating iconic signs such as the 1952 Kleenex sign featuring Little Lulu, the 1950s Bond Clothing waterfall, and the 1960s Camel sign.<sup>29</sup> Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Artkraft Strauss's work expanded to include marketing and promotion, advertising space leasing, sign design, and media consulting. They continued to produce some of the most recognizable signs, including a half-scale model of a Concord jet for British Airways and the three-dimensional Coke bottle. In 2006, Artkraft Strauss Sign Company closed its factory; however, the company continues to operate a sign design and consulting business today.

### Recent History

Long Island City's manufacturing industry peaked in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Long Island City's industrial economy, like the rest of New York City's, was in decline and many of its warehouses and factories were abandoned.<sup>30</sup> The problem was particularly acute along the waterfront at Hunters Point where the abandoned Newsprint printing plant and the Long Island Railroad's relinquished North Shore Freight Branch's float bridge and tracks, located between 48<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Streets, contributed to the underutilization of the neighborhood.<sup>31</sup> In 1992, the Queens West Development Corporation was incorporated to remediate and redevelop the industrial waterfront along the East River.<sup>32</sup> Plans for redevelopment ultimately included the construction of 10 residential towers, retail amenities, two public schools, and a 13-acre public park along the riverfront.<sup>33</sup>

In 2001, Pepsi closed its Long Island City plant and moved its distributing operations and offices to College Point.<sup>34</sup> The facility was sold in 2003 to the Queens West Development Corporation with the exception of a small parcel of land that Pepsi retained for the relocation and preservation of the Pepsi-Cola Sign.<sup>35</sup> Because the development would be located in front of the development's residential buildings, an easement agreement with the developer required that the Pepsi-Cola Sign be preserved as is; any future changes to the lettering, logo, and lighting of the sign would require the approval of the easement holder.<sup>36</sup> In 2004, the sign was removed from the roof of the building to make way for its demolition.<sup>37</sup> The sign was first relocated to a temporary location about 300 feet south of the original site.<sup>38</sup> As part of the relocation, a new base was created for the sign.<sup>39</sup> In 2009, the sign was moved within feet of its historic location,

now within the confines of Gantry Plaza State Park.<sup>40</sup> To this day, Pepsi remains responsible for the maintenance of the sign.<sup>41</sup>

### **STATEMENT OF REGULATORY INTENT**

By law, the Commission cannot regulate the content of signs. In addition, the Commission has not regulated the brightness or duration of lighting. Consequently, regulation of the Pepsi-Cola Sign will not include regulation of the name or bottle, or the time and intensity of lighting. The Commission may regulate changes to the configuration and relationship of the words and symbols, the style of the font, the transparency of the armature, color, the perimeter illumination, and the presence of the sign in this location. Minor changes to the type of illumination, existing transparency, configuration, lettering and symbol will be reviewed and approved at the staff level. Ordinary repair and maintenance of the sign and armature, including in-kind replacement of materials, shall not require any review by the LPC.

Report researched and written by  
Corinne Engelbert  
Research Department



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Statements about support for the Pepsi-Cola Sign during the backlog process reflect specific testimony given or submitted during the hearing or while the record was open. In addition, the Commission received numerous more general communications about the backlog that were directed at all items on the backlog. These items were not specifically submitted while the record was open. Due to the volume and variety of these more general emails they are not tallied for individual buildings.

<sup>2</sup> “Regular Pepsi Bottles,” USA Soda, <http://www.usasoda.com/pepsiregbottles.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Sources for this section include: *The Encyclopedia of New York City*. ed., Kenneth T. Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); “Boom Town,” *Newsday*, Jan 9, 1994, 3; Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Sohmer & Company Piano Factory Building* (LP-2172) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Donald G. Presa.

<sup>4</sup> “Boom Town,” 3.

<sup>5</sup> Portions of this section are adapted from: Landmarks Preservation Commission, *Pepsi-Cola Building Designation Report* (LP-1920) (New York: City of New York, 1995), prepared by David M. Breiner with contributions from Gale Harris. Additional sources for this section include: Milward W. Martin, *Twelve Full Ounces* (New York: Hold, Rinehard and Winston, 1962); Bob Stoddard, *Pepsi: 100 Years* (Los Angeles: General Pub. Group, c. 1997); “History of the Birthplace,” The Pepsi Store, <http://www.pepsistore.com/history.asp>; “The History of Pepsi-Cola,” Leader Distribution Systems, Inc., <http://pepsibrattleboro.com/historyofpepsi>.

<sup>6</sup> Queens County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds & Conveyances, Liber 3916, 39713; “War News Causes Mistrial,” *Long Island City NY Star Journal*, Dec 18, 1941, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Pepsi-Cola Company, *1940 Annual Report*.

<sup>8</sup> According to the 1993 Department of Buildings application for the replacement of the Pepsi Cola sign, the original roof sign/structure permit was issued May 10, 1940, registration #5772, permit #2925, as per page 23 of the register book for New Signs etc.; “Advertising News and Notes,” *New York Times*, Aug 30, 1940, 33; “Pepsi-Cola Erects Huge Electric Sign,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Aug 29, 1940, 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Moody’s Manual of Investments*, (New York: Moody’s Investors Service, 1925), 2176.

<sup>10</sup> “Alden J. Cusick,” *New York Times*, Jan 11, 1983, B14.

<sup>11</sup> *Moody’s Manual of Investments*, (New York: Moody’s Investors Service, 1940), 664.

<sup>12</sup> “Outdoor Advertising Timeline,” Duke University Libraries, <http://blogs.library.duke.edu/digital-collections/road/timeline/1930-1939/>, accessed Mar 24, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Metz, “Market Place,” *New York Times*, Aug 2, 1972, 48; “Gamble-Skogmo,” *New York Times*, Apr 10, 1964, 53.

<sup>14</sup> “A Brief History of the Sign Industry,” American Sign Museum, <http://www.americansignmuseum.org/briefhistory/>; Rudi Stern, *Let There Be Neon*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1979), 16-33; 80-86; Christoph Ribbat, *Flickering Light: A History of Neon* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013), 67-68; Eric Schiff, “How do neon lights work?” *Scientific American*, April 17, 2006, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-do-neon-lights-work/>; Frank Northen Magill, *Great Lives from History*, (Ipswich: Salem Press, 1990), 457.

<sup>15</sup> “Long Island City,” *New York Neon Blog*, Sept 27, 2012, <http://nyneon.blogspot.com/2012/09/long-island-city.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Statement is based on searches of relevant articles in the *New York Times*. Articles include: Milo Maltbie, “Bill Boards and Sky Signs,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1902; “Billboard Commission Advises Drastic Reforms,” *New York Times*, April 5, 1914, SM10.

<sup>17</sup> “All Now in Accord on Billboard Rules,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1914, 7; Municipal Art Society, “Guarding New York City’s Streetscape,” April 9, 2009, <http://www.mas.org/guarding-new-york-citys-streetscape-with-a-gren-light-from-the-southern-district-its-up-to-the-city/>.

<sup>18</sup> City of New York, Building Zone Resolution, July 25, 1916; Herbert S. Swan, “Zoning the Billboard,” *New York Times*, Oct 5, 1919, 121.

<sup>19</sup> City of New York, Zoning Resolution: Web Version, Mar 7, 2016, <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/zoning/zoning-text/allarticles.pdf?r=030716>, accessed Mar 24, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Bob Stoddard, *The Encyclopedia of Pepsi: Cola Collectibles* (Iola: Krause Publications 2002), 13-14.

<sup>21</sup> Stoddard, *The Encyclopedia of Pepsi: Cola Collectibles*, 13-14.

<sup>22</sup> Stoddard, *Pepsi: 100 Years*, 69 & 102.

- <sup>23</sup> Determination is based on the appearance of the Pepsi bottle which closely resembles the glass bottles which were produced during the 1970s; “Regular Pepsi Bottles,” USA Soda, <http://www.usasoda.com/pepsiregbottles.htm>.
- <sup>24</sup> This section is based on the Collection Overview of the Artkraft Strauss records at the New York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts Division.
- <sup>25</sup> Robert Jackowitz on behalf The Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, Letter to Alex Herrera, Director of Preservation at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Nov 9, 1993.
- <sup>26</sup> Caroline Kane on behalf of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Letter to Charles Kindya, Director of Facility Operations at Pepsi Cola Company, November 19, 1993.
- <sup>27</sup> Robert Jackowitz on behalf of The Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, Fax Memo to David Hughes, Dec 9, 1993.
- <sup>28</sup> Robert Jackowitz on behalf of Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, letter to Peter Wilcox, Pepsi-Cola Corporation, June 20, 2002.
- <sup>29</sup> Tama Starr and Edward Hayman, *Signs and Wonders* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 102.
- <sup>30</sup> Sarah Fajardo, “The History and Renewal of Long Island City and Dutch Kills, Queens,” *Untapped Cities*, Aug 12, 2013, “<http://untappedcities.com/2013/08/12/history-renewal-long-island-city-dutch-kills-queens/>, accessed on Mar 24, 2016.
- <sup>31</sup> “History of Long Island City,” *Queens West Villager*, [http://queenswestvillager.com/about/detail/history\\_of\\_long\\_island\\_city](http://queenswestvillager.com/about/detail/history_of_long_island_city), accessed on Mar 24, 2016; David W. Dunlap, “Builders of the project want the good will of the Community,” *New York Times*, Sept 18, 1994, 454. “Community Archeology: A Look at the Hunters Point Community in Western Queens,” [http://tvsconsultant.mysite.com/1\\_column\\_page\\_13.html](http://tvsconsultant.mysite.com/1_column_page_13.html), accessed on Mar 24, 2016; Sunny Side Yards Rendering 1904, Trains Are Fun, <http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/licity/licity.htm>, accessed Mar 24, 2016; David W. Dunlap, “\$2.3 Billion Plan on the Horizon for Hunters Point,” *New York Times*, Jun 28, 1992, R1.
- <sup>32</sup> “Purpose & Mission,” Queens West Development Corporation, [http://esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/Data/RequiredPostings/2012/QueensWestDevCorp\\_QWDC2012.pdf](http://esd.ny.gov/CorporateInformation/Data/RequiredPostings/2012/QueensWestDevCorp_QWDC2012.pdf).
- <sup>33</sup> “Development Plan,” Queens West Development Corporation, <http://www.queenswest.org/developmentPlan.asp>, accessed on Mar 24, 2016.
- <sup>34</sup> Alexander Dworkowitz, “Pepsi to move LIC distribution to College Point,” *Times Ledger*, <http://www.timesledger.com/stories/2001/43/20011025-archive552.html>, accessed on Mar 24, 2016.
- <sup>35</sup> Queens County, Office of the Register, Liber Deeds & Conveyances.
- <sup>36</sup> Queens County, Office of the Register, Easements.
- <sup>37</sup> Louis M. Brill, “The Pepsi-Cola Generation,” Feb 20, 2006, <http://www.signweb.com/content/the-pepsi-cola-generation#.VtTAYvkrJhE>, accessed on Mar 24, 2016.
- <sup>38</sup> David W. Dunlap, “3,200 Apartments to Be Built in Glow of Giant Pepsi Sign,” *New York Times*, Sept 24, 2003.
- <sup>39</sup> Because the sign was calendared, the LPC staff reviewed and approved the new structure; Jennifer Field on behalf of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Letter to Peter Wilcox, Pepsi Cola Co., September 19, 2003.
- <sup>40</sup> Letter from Jennifer Field; David W. Dunlap, “Saving a Spot for Pepsi-Cola as a Tower Goes Up,” *New York Times*, July 10, 2013, A21.
- <sup>41</sup> Queens County, Office of the Register, Easements.

## FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this structure, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Pepsi-Cola Sign has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Pepsi-Cola Sign is one of the best known features of the New York City waterfront, representing commercial advertising and American industry; that the sign serves as a reminder of Long Island City's industrial past; that the sign was constructed in 1940 and erected on the roof of the Pepsi-Cola bottling facility in Long Island City; that contemporary accounts attribute the sign to the General Outdoor Advertising Company, one of the largest advertising companies of its time; that at the time of its construction, the Pepsi-Cola Sign was the longest electric sign in New York State; that the sign's design closely reflects the company's 1939 trademark logo; that the sign stands today within feet of its original location; that due to significant deterioration, Artkraft Strauss Sign Corporation, a company that produced some of the most memorable Times Square spectacles of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt the sign in 1993 in a manner that was in keeping with the design, colors, and details of the original sign.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a landmark the Pepsi-Cola Sign Borough of Queens and designates Queens Tax Map Block 21, Lot 120 as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustaffson, Kim Vauss, Commissioner



Pepsi-Cola Sign as it appeared in its original form, undated.  
*Photo: Courtesy of PepsiCo*



Pepsi-Cola Sign after the "5c" was removed, undated.  
*Photo: Courtesy of PepsiCo*



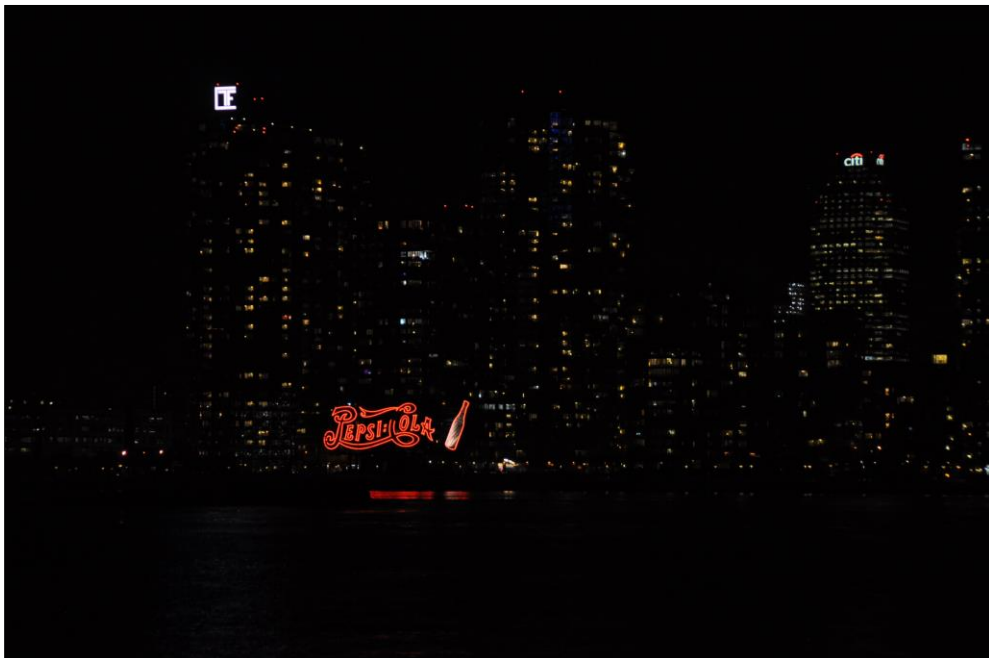
Pepsi-Cola Sign on rooftop of the Pepsi-Cola bottling factory in Long Island City, 1988  
*Photo: Courtesy of Beyer Blinder Belle, 1988*



Pepsi-Cola Sign in Gantry Plaza State Park  
*Photo: Christopher D. Brazee, 2014*

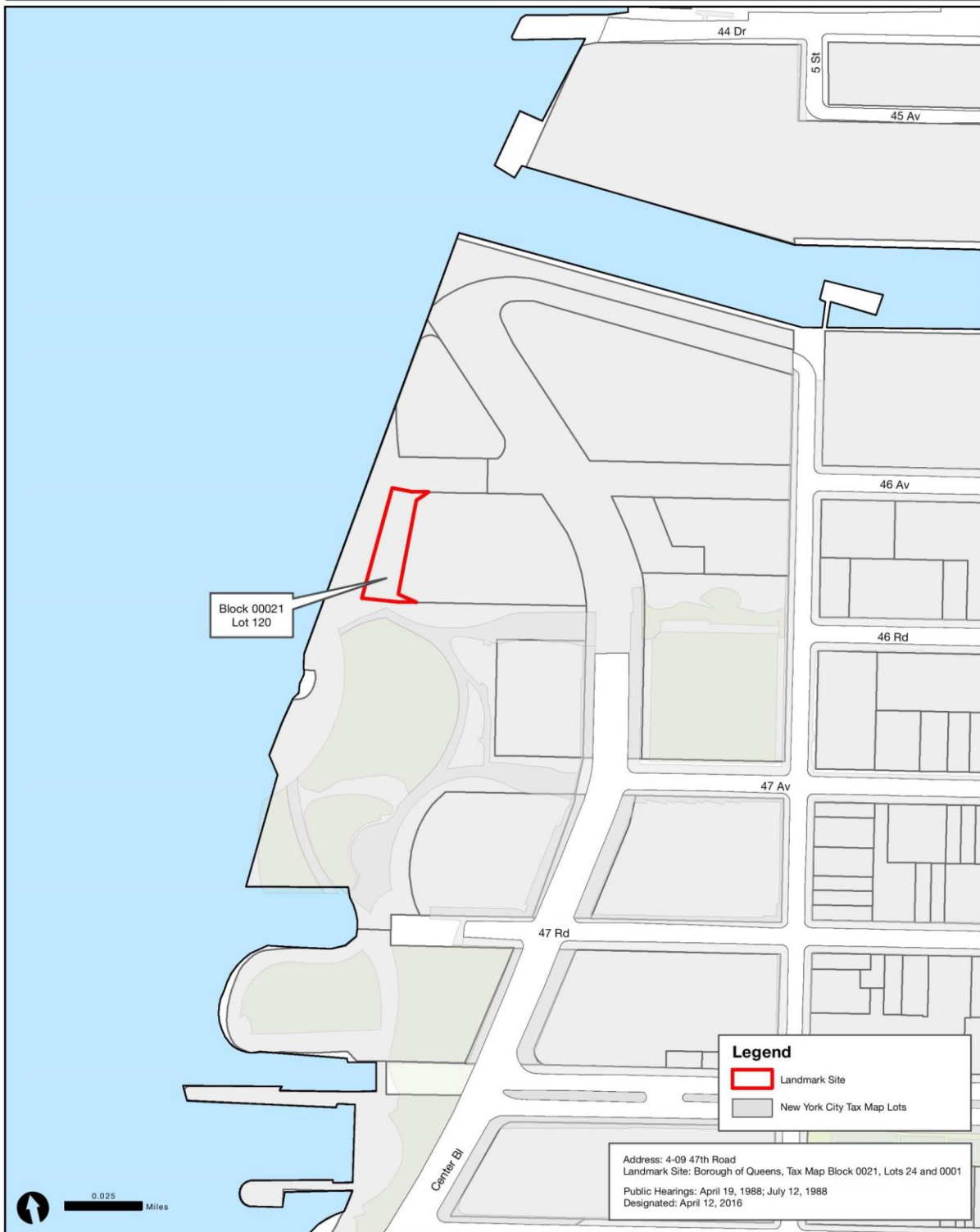


Pepsi-Cola Sign illuminated at night.  
*Photo: Corinne Engelbert, 2016*



Pepsi-Cola Sign on the Long Island City waterfront.  
*Photo: Corinne Engelbert, 2016*

**Pepsi-Cola Sign | LP-1653**



Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 15v1, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, DHW, Date: 4.12.2016