

Central Park May Become Landmark

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Under a change in the law enacted late last year, the city's Landmarks Commission is considering designation of Central Park as its first scenic landmark.

An amendment to the 1965 landmark preservation law gave the commission powers to designate not only buildings but scenic and interior spaces as well.

At a public hearing scheduled for March 26 at City Hall, it will use its new authority for the first time by considering Central Park—the 19th Century creation of Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux that already is listed on the national registry of historic sites and long has been considered one of the great parks of the world.

Funds Cut

The hearing comes at a time when restoration funds for the 840-acre park are being cut by the Beame administration. A \$7 million program to restore greenery, curb land erosion and preserve many architectural treasures was announced by former Mayor Lindsay last December.

It was to have been the first phase of a \$55 million project over a 10-year period, but the initial \$7 million

now has been cut in half, with the rest of the money distributed to rehabilitate parks in other boroughs.

In announcing the hearing, Beverly Moss Spatt, new chairman of the commission, said:

"It is an appropriate moment to acknowledge the need to preserve and protect not only buildings but other elements, such as open space, that compose our environment. We have a new sense of the delicate ecological balance that must be maintained if we are to survive in the complex world today.

'Intense Concentration'

"The proposed designation of scenic landmarks becomes even more important when we consider the intense concentration of buildings in small areas and the continuing absorption of open space."

The change in the law last year was carefully drawn to avoid any interference with normal maintenance if a park is selected as a landmark.

There was no indication from the commission what interior space would be considered first for designation under its expanded authority.