



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 16, 2011 / Calendar No. 18

N 110181 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 22, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the 500 Fifth Avenue Building, 500 Fifth Avenue (Block 1258, Lot 34), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 14, 2010 (Designation List No. 436/LP-2427), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On December 14, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the 500 Fifth Avenue Building, located at 500 Fifth Avenue (Block 1258, Lot 34), as a city landmark.

The landmark site at 500 Fifth Avenue is located on the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, in Midtown Manhattan, Community District 5. The Art Deco-style, 59-story skyscraper was designed by the nationally recognized architectural firm Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, who had also designed the Empire State Building. At the time of its opening, 500 Fifth Avenue was the crowning achievement of developer Walter J. Salmon, who had rebuilt West 42nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in the early 20th century.

In 1929 Arthur Loomis Harmon, who had spent nearly a decade as a designer with McKim, Mead & White, joined Richmond Harold Shreve and William Frederick Lamb, who had met, worked together and eventually become partners at Carrere & Hastings, Shreve & Lamb. Shreve, Lamb & Harmon quickly became one of the City's premier design firms, known primarily for its commercial office building work, which tended to be spare and functional, at a time that could be described as a transitional period between the dynamic sumptuousness of Art Deco and the austerity and purity of postwar International. In addition to a number of other New York City Individual Landmark buildings and prominent additions, the firm is best known for having also designed the Empire State Building. The simultaneous construction of the Empire

State Building and 500 Fifth Avenue from 1930-31 set a new standard for speed and efficiency in building construction.

The dramatically massed exterior of 500 Fifth Avenue expressed the constraints of the underlying zoning, which allowed more bulk on the 42nd Street side than on the Fifth Avenue side and thus determined the positioning of the tower on the base. The building's tight footprint resulted in the complex geometry of setbacks stepping up asymmetrically to the slender tower.

The proposed landmark site is located in two zoning districts, a C5-3 and a C6-6; the maximum FAR for the portion of the landmark site in these districts is 16. The subject building has 659,112 square feet of floor area on a zoning lot that has 20,920 square feet of lot area.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a lot contiguous to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building or one which is across the street and opposite to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building, or in the case of a corner lot, one which fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. Because the proposed landmark site is currently overbuilt, there are no unused development rights available for transfer under the existing zoning.

All landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. In addition, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

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