



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 19, 2019, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the rescission of the Landmark Site of Public School No. 31, 425 Grand Concourse (Block 2346, Lot 1), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 10, 2019 (Designation List No. 516/LP-1435A), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 1.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the New York 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 landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On December 10, 2019, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) rescinded the landmark site designation for Public School No. 31 (PS 31), located at 425 Grand Concourse (Block 2346, Lot 1) in the Mott Haven neighborhood of Bronx, Community District 1. The building was demolished in 2013 after suffering structural damage from Hurricane Sandy.

LPC designated the site as a landmark on July 15, 1986 (LP-1435; Designation List No. 185). At the time, the site was a prominent example of the Collegiate Gothic style, particularly within public school architecture in the late 19th century. New York City accommodated a large influx of immigrants in the 19th century, requiring additional schools. PS 31 was built for this reason in 1899 and was known as the “Castle on the Concourse”, displaying late Gothic details such as Tudor-arched doorways and pointed windows.

The Department of Education ordered a structural investigation of PS 31, and 12 similar schools, after the collapse of a wall section in the early 1990s. The subsequent four investigations identified framing and roof issues, as well as extensive corrosion and disrepair at PS 31. In the late 1990s, PS 31 was vacated, shoring and bracing was installed, and a rehabilitation plan was developed.

PS 31 was planned for both rehabilitation and expansion, but due to budget constraints, the expansion was put on hold. Subsequently, the site was transferred to the New York City Economic Development

Corporation and then to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. Additional engineering review resulted in additional protection measures, such as sealing the windows.

In 2012, Superstorm Sandy further damaged the building and subsequent assessments found that its condition had deteriorated beyond repair. In 2013, the Department of Buildings determined the building posed a threat to public safety and issued an emergency declaration for full demolition. On December 17, 2013, LPC approved an advisory report on the demolition of PS 31. The PS 31 building was demolished in 2015, but the site remained listed as a New York City landmark.

On November 29, 2017, the City Planning Commission approved a City-sponsored application by the NYC Housing Preservation and Development for a UDAAP (C 180032 HAX), rezoning from C4-4 to C6-3 (C 180031 ZMX), and text amendment (N 180033 ZRX) to modify the bulk in certain C6-3 districts and to designate the site for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing to permit the construction of a 27-story, approximately 275,000 square-foot mixed-use building providing 277 units of affordable housing at the site of the former PS 31 building.

On December 10, 2019, the LPC rescinded the landmark site designation for PS 31 (LP-1435A; Designation List No. 516). The LPC found that the landmark site “no longer possesses Public School No. 31, that the Landmark Site has been cleared of all structures, and that the Landmark Site no longer possesses special character or special historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.”

The subject landmark rescission does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. In addition, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the rescission of the landmark site and projected public improvements. The rescission will allow for the future development of the site.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, *Esq.*, *Vice-Chairman*

DAVID BURNEY, **ALLEN P. CAPPELLI**, *Esq.*, **ALFRED C. CERULLO**, **III**,

MICHELLE R. de la UZ, **JOSEPH I. DOUEK**, **RICHARD W. EADDY**, **HOPE KNIGHT**,

ANNA HAYES LEVIN, **ORLANDO MARIN**, **LARISA ORTIZ**, **RAJ RAMPERSHAD**,
Commissioners