



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 1, 2009/Calendar No. 9

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 22, 2009, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Fillmore Place Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 12, 2009 (List No. 413, LP No. 2333). Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 1. The district boundaries are:

bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the northern curbline of Fillmore Place and the western curbline of Roebling Street, continuing southerly across the roadbed of Fillmore Place and along the western curbline of Roebling Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 168 Roebling Street, westerly along said line and the southern property line of 168 Roebling Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 30 Fillmore Place, westerly along the southern property lines of 30 through 18 Fillmore Place, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 16 Fillmore Place, westerly along the southern property lines of 16 through 10 Fillmore Place, northerly along a portion of the western property line of 10 Fillmore Place, westerly along the southern property line of 675 Driggs Avenue to the eastern curbline of Driggs Avenue, northerly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending easterly from the northern curbline of North 1st Street, westerly across the roadbed of Driggs Avenue and along the northern curbline of North 1st Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 676 Driggs Avenue, northerly along the western property lines of 676 through 662 Driggs Avenue, easterly along the northern property line of 662 Driggs Avenue to the western curbline of Driggs Avenue, southerly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending westerly from the northern property line of 667 Driggs Avenue, easterly along said line across the roadbed of Driggs Avenue and along the northern property lines of 667 Driggs Avenue and 7 Fillmore Place, northerly along a portion of the western property line of 9 Fillmore Place, easterly along the northern property lines of 9 through 21 Fillmore Place, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 21 Fillmore Place, easterly along the northern property line of 23 Fillmore Place, southerly along the eastern property line of 23 Fillmore Place to the northern curbline of Fillmore Place, easterly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

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 May 12, 2009 the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) unanimously designated the Fillmore Place Historic District (List 413, LP-2333). Located in the Williamsburg section of

Brooklyn Community District 1, the subject historic district is generally bounded by Greenpoint Avenue, West Street, Java Street, and Franklin Avenue, in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn, Community District 1. The historic district consists of 29 properties occupied by attached residential and mixed use buildings.

The Village of Williamsburgh was chartered in 1827. In the late 1840s Ephraim Miller and Alfred Clock began investing in real estate and acquired several contiguous parcels of land and mapped out 37 individual building lots facing onto a newly created street Fillmore Place. The Fillmore Place Historic District includes 29 lots several of which notably the short row at 672 to 676 Driggs Avenue and the individual structure at No. 662—that were not part of Clock and Miller’s plan of 37 lots but that were built at about the same time and are similar architecturally to the structures on Fillmore Place.

Clock and Miller commissioned masons Jacob Sheppard and John Rourke to construct the nine houses now known as 12 to 28 Fillmore Place. Clock and Miller also sold a number of those lots facing onto the busier thoroughfares of Roebling Street and Driggs Avenue. These parcels were developed with structures similar in many ways to those on Fillmore Place but incorporating ground floor storefronts. A few of the lots on Fillmore Place that had not been improved during the 1850s were developed in subsequent decades.

Most of the buildings within the Fillmore Place Historic District were designed in a restrained Italianate style. The austere planar brick façades are ornamented primarily by projecting stone door hoods, molded stone lintels and projecting sills, and bracketed wood cornices. Several retain their original iron areaway fences and stoop railings. While the buildings were erected as multi-family dwellings for working class tenants, their architecture has more in common with fashionable middle- and upper-class single-family row houses. The exterior design of the structures on Fillmore Place is in fact quite similar to that of buildings erected in elegant neighborhoods such as Chelsea in Manhattan.

The buildings within the Fillmore Place Historic District have a history of long-term ownership and occupancy. This stability in ownership and occupancy patterns on Fillmore Place meant that

the street saw few significant changes, even as the neighborhood around it was undergoing major transformations. Even the opening of the Williamsburg Bridge in 1903, had little impact on the physical fabric of the street and it remains perhaps the most intact enclave of buildings erected during Williamsburg's initial period of urban development.

The most famous resident to have lived within the Fillmore Place Historic District—author Henry Miller—moved into the house at 662 Driggs Avenue in 1891, just before the opening of the Williamsburg Bridge. His description of Fillmore Place in his novel *The Tropic of Capricorn* continues to reflect many people's sentiment of the little block: “[it was] the most enchanting street I have ever seen in all my life. It was the ideal street—for a boy, a lover, a maniac, a drunkard, a crook, a lecher, a thug, an astronomer, a musician, a poet, a tailor, a shoemaker, a politician.”

The properties in the Fillmore Place Historic District are split between three zoning districts. The properties on the north side of the Fillmore Place are zoned M1-2/R6B, with 2.0 FAR for manufacturing, commercial, community facility and residential uses, while the properties on the south side of the Fillmore Place are in an R6B district, with 2.0 FAR for residential and community facility uses. The five properties on Driggs Avenue are in an M1-2/R6A district, with 2.0 FAR for manufacturing and commercial uses and 3.0 FAR for residential and community facility uses.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, no transfer of development rights is permitted from any structure within an historic district. All landmark buildings within historic districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on June 17, 2009 (Calendar No. 27).

There were no speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Fillmore Place Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and plans for the development, growth, and improvements in the vicinity of the area involved.

The proposed historic district does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal within the historic district or surrounding area.

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