



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 15, 2010/Calendar No. 4

N 110135 HKQ

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 4, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building located at 89-31 161st Street (Block 9760, Lot 27) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 26, 2010 (List No. 434 LP, No. 2386), Borough of Queens, Community District 12.

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 October 26, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building located at 89-31 161st Street (Block 9760, Lot 27) as a city landmark.

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building is located on the east side of 161st Street at the foot of 90th Avenue. The designated site is in the commercial core of Jamaica within the Special Downtown Jamaica District. The building was designed by George W. Conable and constructed in 1928-29 to hold the offices of the Chamber of Commerce. The organization relocated to a site on Rockaway Boulevard in 1999, but the building continues to be used as an office building.

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce building is a handsome example of the Georgian Revival style popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. To reflect the prominence of the Chamber of Commerce within the burgeoning Jamaica business community, Conable designed a ten-story tall structure with a distinguished facade based on 18th-century American and British precedents. Above the terra-cotta base with its central entrance in the style of a triumphal arch, Conable emphasized the building's verticality through the division of the upper brick facade by cast-stone quoins into three sections, capping the wide center section with a prominent three-story pavilion that terminates in a pedimented temple.

The landmark site is located in a C4-5X zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 5.0, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 39,300 square feet of floor area.

The Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building contains approximately 65,360 square feet of floor 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 Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building is built with more FAR than is allowable today, there are no unused development rights available for transfer.

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.

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