



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 19, 2015, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Bank of Manhattan Company Building, Long Island City, 29-27 Queens Plaza North, aka 29-27 41st Avenue, 29-39 Northern Blvd. (Block 403, Lot 9 formerly part of Lot 21), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 12, 2015 (Designation List 481/LP-2570), Borough of Queens, Community District 1.

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, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated The Bank of the Manhattan Company, Long Island City Building (the Clocktower building) as a city landmark. The landmark designation consists of Block 403, Lot 9 (formerly part of Lot 21), in part consisting of the land beneath the main building and 10 feet of the one- and two-story rear addition. The Bank of the Manhattan Company Building is located on an irregularly-shaped lot facing Queens Plaza North (41st Avenue, formerly Skillman Place), between Northern Boulevard (formerly Jackson Avenue) and 41st Avenue (formerly Hunter Avenue). The building is located within the Dutch Kills neighborhood of the greater Long Island City neighborhood in Queens Community District 1.

Constructed in 1925, the Clocktower building is 11 stories tall, with a three-story clock tower at the south end of the building. Consistent with many office towers constructed in New York City at the start of the 20th century, the “buff-colored pressed brick” and Indiana limestone facade is organized like a classical column, with the arrangement of floors suggesting a base, shaft and capital. The limestone base (now altered), which originally contained the banking hall, was designed to complement an adjoining three-story Title Guarantee & Trust Company (1920, later the Banker’s Trust Company), which stood directly to the west (this building has since been demolished). At the time of completion, the lowest floors were divided into three vertical bays, each with small gridded windows and a band of decorative relief running across the top. There

was a prominent masonry entrance portico with a glazed transom and a neo-Gothic-style entablature framing a horizontal bronze relief depicting Oceanus. This Greek god was a traditional symbol of the Manhattan company – a reclining figure of Oceanus decorated the reservoir that the company had erected on Chambers Street in 1800 (demolished), as well as the entrance to the Manhattan Company Building at 40 Wall Street (status of bronze sculpture unknown). The elevator lobby that served the office floors was located to the right (east) of the bank's entrance. Above the first-floor windows was the bank's name, written with raised metal capital letters (later changed to Chase Manhattan Bank, now hidden by a sign).

The fenestration varies on each facade, with the fewest number of windows facing east, towards Northern Boulevard. This elevation also incorporates a single vertical row of arched openings that enclose balconies and a steel fire stair. Each floor has seven windows. The outer windows are arranged in pairs while the three center windows are slightly closer together and continue into the lower part of the clock tower, where the uppermost row have round arches. This arrangement creates a slight vertical emphasis, drawing attention to the clock and the top of the building. At each corner, just above the level of the parapet, is a large relief that depicts Oceanus resting atop a plaque with the initials of the Bank of the Manhattan Company: "BM."

The building's most visually-prominent feature is the clock tower which made the bank an instant landmark. Three stories tall, it has four glass clock faces with Roman numerals. Before construction began, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* commented: "A four-way clock will rise from the eleventh floor and will be a landmark easily seen from all points of Queens as well as from Manhattan." The Electime Co., based in Brooklyn, supplied the Telechron (non-winding) clock. On each side, directly above the number XII, is a cast-stone relief depicting, from top to bottom, a medieval knight's helmet, a sunken plaque, and a draped garland. These features complemented the tower's neo-Gothic-style embellishment.

The Clocktower building fronts on Dutch Kills Green, a nearly one-acre public open space that replaced three public parking lots. Adjacent blocks are occupied with newly developed, high-

density hotel and office buildings as well as older commercial buildings converted to residential use. Tax Lot 1, a large lot behind the subject property, is owned by the MTA and is used as a construction staging site for the LIRR's East Side Access project. Elevated tracks for the N and Q lines run above Northern Boulevard to the east of the site, and an entrance to the Queens Plaza subway station (E, M, R) is located at the corner of Northern Boulevard and Queens Plaza North, adjacent to the site.

The owner of the subject property has filed plans with the New York City Department of Buildings to develop adjacent to the Clocktower building an approximately 900-unit building in part comprised of unused floor area on the Clocktower site. The Clocktower building will likely be used for offices, some residential amenity space, and ground floor retail space. Two lots flanking the Clocktower lot to the west and east, respectively, will be developed with buildings that will match the heights of the former buildings on these lots (55-foot building to the west and 35-foot building to the east).

The Clocktower building is zoned M1-6/R10 District (12.0 FAR, residential and most commercial, light manufacturing, and community facility uses) and falls within the Queens Plaza Subdistrict (QP Subdistrict) of the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District (LIC District). The subject lot area is 12,625 square feet. The maximum allowed floor area on the site at 12.0 FAR is 151,500 and the floor area of the Clocktower building is 50,557, leaving 100,943 square feet of unused development rights associated with the site. 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 building. There are nine potential sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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.

CARL WEISBROD, *Chairman*

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