



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated February 3, 2017, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the National Title Guaranty Company Building, 185 Montague Street (Block 244, Lot 13) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on January 24, 2017 (Designation List No. 494/LP No. 2587), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 2.

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 January 24, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the National Title Guaranty Company Building as a City landmark. The landmark site, at 185 Montague Street, (Block 244, Lot 13) is located on Montague Street between Clinton Street and Cadman Plaza West in the Downtown Brooklyn neighborhood of Brooklyn, Community District 2.

The 16-story Art Deco style building was designed in 1929-30 by the firm Corbett, Harrison & MacMurray, led by senior partner Harvey Wiley Corbett. The building was initially commissioned by the National Title Guaranty Company for its new headquarters on Montague Street. The National Title Guaranty Company had been founded in 1924 to meet the needs of rapid real estate development in Brooklyn in the early 20th century and occupied the building until the company was liquidated in 1935.

The National Title Guaranty Company Building signifies a time period when Brooklyn's financial services sector was a major presence on Montague Street. This building is one of three designated landmarks on the block, all of which were buildings related to the financial services industry. The

National Title Guaranty Company Building is also an important example of an early-20th-century skyscraper and particularly of the Art Deco skyscraper, which was a popular building style from the mid-1920s through the 1930s.

The building rises to an initial height of 13 stories, above which there is a tower with a series of setbacks rising to a total height of 16 stories, representing a style influenced by the 1916 zoning law. The façade consists of brick piers rising from stepped buttresses of brick and limestone. The pierced limestone screen at the base of the building consists of a series of panels featuring decorative elements. It was designed by Rene Paul Chambellan, an influential architectural sculptor responsible for the design of many building ornaments in the 1920s and 1930s, including those on many Art Deco buildings.

The landmark site is in a C5-2A zoning district, which allows a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 10.0 for residential, commercial, and community facility uses. The 5,000-square-foot lot allows development up to a total of 50,000 square feet. The existing floor area of the building is 58,000 square feet, resulting in an FAR of 11.6. Therefore, there are no unused development rights available on 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. In the case of the National Title Guaranty Company Building Landmark, there are no unused development rights to 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 building.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

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