



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

June 22, 2011 / Calendar No. 19

N 110345 HKK

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 19, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building, 176 Remsen Street (part of Block 255, Lot 36), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 10, 2011 (Designation List 442/LP-2336), 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 May 10, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building, located at 176 Remsen Street (Block 255, part of Lot 36), as a city landmark.

The neo-Classical-style Brooklyn Union Gas Company Building was constructed in 1914 as the new headquarters for the borough's oldest and most important utility company. In the early 20th Century, this area of Downtown Brooklyn near Court Street was redeveloped with larger office buildings, including the eight-story structure erected for the Brooklyn Union Gas Company at 176 Remsen Street. The Brooklyn Union Gas Company played an important role in the history of Brooklyn, tracing its origins to 1824, and providing street illumination for the City starting in 1849.

Frank Freeman, the architect of the building was one of the most successful Brooklyn architects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For the Brooklyn Union Gas Company building, Freeman used a Classically-inspired architectural vocabulary, including Doric-order ornaments on the granite-clad two-story base, with a projecting entrance portico flanked by fluted columns. The design of the building references its original use as a gas company headquarters with devices such as flaming torches and blazing oil lamps.

The Brooklyn Union Gas Company occupied the building until 1962, when it was sold to St. Francis College and converted to an academic facility. The building has undergone very few exterior alterations since its completion in 1914.

The landmark site is located in a C5-2A zoning district in the Special Downtown Brooklyn District. Located on a 48,851 square foot zoning lot with an allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 10, the landmark site could be developed with approximately 488,510 square feet of floor area. The zoning lot is developed with 272,729 square feet of floor area located in five buildings, including the proposed landmark. Therefore, there are approximately 215,781 square feet of floor area available for transfer. Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, a lot with a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a lot contiguous to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark or one which is across the street and opposite to the 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 fourteen potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the proposed 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.

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