



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 2, 2016, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Martin Erdmann House (Block 1291, Lot 127), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 22, 2016 (Designation List No. 490/LP-2578), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

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 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 November 22, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Martin Erdmann House as a City landmark. The landmark site, at 57-59 East 55th Street (Block 1291, Lot 127), is located on the north side of East 55th Street, between Madison and Park Avenues, in the East Midtown neighborhood of Community District 5.

The Martin Erdmann House, constructed between 1908-1909, was designed by the prominent New York City architectural firm Taylor & Levi. The firm is best remembered for its high-style period-revival buildings, including both urban townhouses and large estates in New England. The Martin Erdmann House is a notable example of an English Renaissance Revival townhouse, a style that reflected the upper-class tastes of Martin Erdmann, a wealthy art collector. The building, an example of a fashionable and dignified townhome designed by Beaux-Arts-trained architects in a style that recalls English precedents, is a relic of the time when the area around Fifth Avenue was an affluent residential neighborhood.

The five-story townhouse features an American basement plan, a limestone façade, a ground-story arcade, multi-light Tudor-style windows with stone mullions, decorative relief panels, a steep front-facing gable, and multiple chimney pots. The English Renaissance/Tudor Revival style was one of the many period-revival styles that were popular in the United States during the early 20th century for both large estate homes and urban townhouses. The house is located midblock amidst much taller glass-and-steel towers.

The Martin Erdmann House is situated in a C5-2.5 zoning district, which allows a maximum base FAR of 10 for residential uses and 12 for commercial and community facility uses, within the Special Midtown District. The building contains 14,541 square feet of floor area on a 3,317 square foot zoning lot (4.38 FAR).

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 (“adjacent lot”). The Martin Erdmann House stands on a 3,317 zoning lot in a C5-2.5 zoning district. The on-site maximum allowable floor area for the computation of transferrable development rights is 40,164. The maximum amount of unused development rights available for transfer from this site under the existing zoning is approximately 25,623 square feet.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers upon application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The landmark is located within the proposed East Midtown Subdistrict. If the proposed East Midtown Subdistrict text amendment (N 170186 ZRM) is approved, landmarks located within the proposed subdistrict will be permitted to transfer its unused development rights to any eligible building similarly located within the proposed subdistrict. The landmark designation does not conflict with the proposed East Midtown Subdistrict text amendment.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. Furthermore, 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.

CARL WEISBROD, Chairman
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman
IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ,
JOSEPH DOUEK, RICHARD W. EADDY,
CHERYL COHEN EFFRON, HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,
ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ Commissioners