



**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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May 7, 2008/Calendar No. 7

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated March 21, 2008, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Fiske Terrace – Midwood Park Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on March 18, 2008 (List 402, LP-2208), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 14. District boundaries are:

properties bounded by a line beginning at the southeast corner of Foster Avenue and the New York City Transit System B.M.T. Division (Brighton Beach Line) right-of-way, extending southerly along the eastern boundary line of the right-of-way, then easterly along the northern property line of 1517 Avenue H, then southerly along the western property line of 1525 Avenue H to the northern curb line of Avenue H, then easterly along the northern curb line of Avenue H across East 17th Street, East 18th Street, and East 19th Street to a point in said curb line formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 827-831 East 19th Street (a/k/a 1901-1911 Avenue H), then northerly along the eastern property lines of 827-831 East 19th Street (a/k/a 1901-1911 Avenue H), 819 East 19th Street (Block 6694, Lot 10), and a portion of 815 East 19<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 6694, Lot 12), then easterly along a portion of the southern property line of 815 East 19th Street, northerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 815 East 19th Street, and westerly along a portion of the northern property line of 815 East 19th Street, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 811, 807, and a portion of 801 East 19th Street, then easterly along a portion of the southerly property line of 801 East 19th Street, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 801 to 751 East 19th Street, then easterly along a portion of the southern property line of 1916 Glenwood Road, then northerly along the eastern property line of 1916 Glenwood Road and across Glenwood Road to the northern curb line of Glenwood Road, then westerly along said curb line to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 1917 Glenwood Road (a/k/a 1913-1917 Glenwood Road), then northerly along the eastern property line and westerly along the northern property line of 1917 Glenwood Road, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 715 to 685 East 19th Street, then easterly along a portion of the southern property line of 677 East 19th Street, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 677, 671, and 665 East 19th Street, then westerly along a portion of the northerly property line of 665 East 19th Street, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 659 to 635 East 19th Street, then easterly along a portion the southern property line of 633 East 19th Street, then northerly along the eastern property lines of 633 to 621 East 19th Street and 1910 Foster Avenue (a/k/a 1910-1918 Foster Avenue) to the southern curb line of Foster Avenue, then westerly along said curb line across East 19th Street, East 18th Street, and East 17th Street to the point of the beginning.

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Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) and (b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of the 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.

The Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park historic district consists of 250 buildings and comprises portions of 12 blocks. It is located in Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood, which developed, over the last half of the nineteenth century, from an agricultural village into one of Greater New York's major suburban areas. Fueling Flatbush's transformation were transportation improvements, including the 1878 opening of the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railroad—the forerunner of today's Brighton subway line—and the 1890s opening of the Ocean Avenue trolley line, both of which served Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park. Flatbush's era of suburban development came to a close by the 1920s, when apartment houses began to replace its freestanding residences.

Featuring generous lawns, tree-shaded streets, and landscaped street malls, the Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District comprises two early-twentieth-century suburbs distinguished by their large, freestanding houses constructed in the popular styles of the time and exhibiting an array of eclectic ornament. The district of approximately 250 houses is largely the work of two locally prominent builders and developers, who constructed most of its houses in the twentieth century's first decade. The primary developer of Fiske Terrace, which lies generally south of Glenwood Road, was the T.B. Ackerson Company; recognized for its efficiency, Ackerson boasted of transforming Fiske Terrace “from woods into city in eighteen months.” About three-quarters of the houses in the Midwood Park portion of the district, generally north of Glenwood Road, were constructed by the John R. Corbin Company, which was an innovator in applying industrial-production techniques to housing construction. Many of Midwood Park's houses are

standard but attractively designed Corbin models that were “planned and practically made” in Corbin’s factory, and shipped to Midwood Park for onsite assembly.

Most of the houses in the Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District are characteristic of suburban residences erected by builders, or from catalogs or plan-books, across the country between 1890 and 1930. These “builder houses” were often constructed in one of three forms: the box-like foursquare, crowned by a hipped or pyramidal roof; the temple-house, featuring a prominent front-facing gable; and the bungalow, with its low profile, deep porch with thick tapered columns, and broadly overhanging eaves. All three forms are strongly represented in Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park, often exhibiting a whimsical eclecticism, but adhering primarily to the popular architectural styles of the time, particularly the Arts and Crafts, Colonial Revival, and gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial Revival. Many of the architects and builders involved in the development of Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park were Flatbush or Brooklyn men who worked extensively in the local suburban market; the most prominent architectural firm was Slee & Bryson, which is credited with 30 houses in the district. The overwhelming majority of houses in Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park were constructed and occupied by 1914.

Today, the Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District—sharply set off from the surrounding city by Foster and Ocean avenues, the Brighton subway line, and the old Manhattan Beach Railroad tracks south of Avenue H—is a quiet oasis in Flatbush. More than a century after the construction of their first residences, the two neighborhoods of the Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District remain distinguished by their many large and well-maintained freestanding houses with large porches set behind generous lawns, and are a showcase for the work of the

innovative John R. Corbin and Ackerson companies, and for the suburban architecture of their era.

The Fiske Terrace-Midwood Park Historic District covers several zoning districts, which include R1-2, R2 and a portion of the R7-1 district. Located south of Foster Avenue to north of Glenwood Road, the R1-2 district has a maximum FAR of 0.5 and permits single-family, detached residences and selected community facility uses. Found south of Glenwood Road and north of Avenue H, the R2 district also has a maximum FAR of 0.5 and permits single-family, detached residence and selected community facility uses. Both districts permit Use Groups 1, 3 and 4. Mapped one hundred feet from the centerline of Ocean Avenue, the R7-1 district encroaches on several parcels split between lower-density districts and the R7-1 district. R7-1 permits maximum residential FAR of 4.0 on wide streets, and 3.44 elsewhere; and a 4.8 FAR for community facility uses. Use Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 are permitted in R7-1 districts.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, no transfer of development rights is permitted from any structure within an historic district. All landmark buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

### **City Planning Commission Public Hearing**

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 23, 2008 (Calendar No. 16).

There were no speakers and the hearing was closed.

## **CONSIDERATION**

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Fiske Terrace – Midwood Park Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements and plans for the development, growth and improvements in the vicinity of the area involved.

The historic district designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal within the historic district or surrounding area.

**AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair**

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice-Chairman**

**ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,**

**ALFRED C. CERULLO III, BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO**

**RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL, SHIRELY. A. McRAE,**

**JOHN MEROLO, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioners.**