



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 22, 2012 / Calendar No. 5

N 130005 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated July 5, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Bowery Bank of New York, 124 Bowery (Block 470, Lot 64), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 26, 2012 (Designation List No. 457/LP-2518), Borough of Manhattan, 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 June 26, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Bowery Bank of New York Building, located at 124 Bowery (Block 470, Lot 64), as a city landmark.

The landmark site at 124 Bowery is located on the northwest corner of the Bowery and Grand Street in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan.

Built between 1900-1902, this monumental five-story bank structure is one of the earliest surviving buildings designed by the architectural firm of York & Sawyer. Edward York and Philip Sawyer, who met while both worked for McKim Mead & White, established a partnership in 1898 which became very successful and resulted in approximately 50 bank building commissions, many of which are designated New York City landmarks. One of the design challenges posed by the Bowery Bank commission—the firm's second or third such commission—was that it occupied a prominent corner site which itself was flanked on both street frontages by an existing bank building for the Bowery Savings Bank, which was designed by McKim Mead & White while the two partners were previously employed there. The later building design, while complementing the existing building, stylistically departs from it in key ways.

While the adjacent facades of the Bowery Savings Bank are distinguished by massive pediments and Corinthian columns suggesting a Roman temple, the Bowery Bank of New York expresses its own function as a modern place of work through a more straightforward monumentality.

Faced in light-colored marble, the building's street elevations are characterized by a number of features evoking the City Beautiful and Beaux-Arts styles, including a rusticated base, segmental-arched windows and a substantial fourth-story cornice with copper cresting that aligns with its neighbor. A second entrance, at the west end of the Grand Street (southern) facade, serves upper floor offices that were leased by the bank to other commercial tenants.

The landmark site is located in a C6-1G zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.0, the 4,987-square-foot zoning lot could be developed with approximately 29,922 square feet of floor area. The Bowery Bank of New York building contains approximately 29,940 square feet of floor area. Therefore, the site is overbuilt and ineligible to provide any floor area for transfer.

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 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. In this case because the landmark site is overbuilt, it has no 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.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair
ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,
ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, MICHELLE DE LA UZ,
MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,
ORLANDO MARÍN, SHIRLEY A. MCRAE, Commissioners