



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 1, 2009/Calendar No.18

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated May 22, 2009, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Audubon Park Historic District designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 12, 2009, (List No. 414, LP 2335), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 12. The district boundaries are:

property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the southern curbline of West 156<sup>th</sup> Street and the western curbline of Broadway, extending northerly across West 156<sup>th</sup> Street and continuing northwesterly along the southwestern curbline of Edward M. Morgan Place to its intersection with the southeastern curbline of Riverside Drive, continuing northeasterly across Edward M. Morgan Place to the intersection of the northeastern curbline of Edward M. Morgan Place with the southern curbline of West 158<sup>th</sup> Street, easterly along the southern curbline of West 158<sup>th</sup> Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 609 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street, northerly across the roadbed and along said property line to the northern property line of 611 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 810 Riverside Drive) to the western property line of 611 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street (aka 810 Riverside Drive), southerly along said property line to the northern curbline of West 158<sup>th</sup> Street, westerly across Riverside Drive and along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the western property line of 807 Riverside Drive (aka 620-624 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street), southerly across the roadbed and along said property line to the northern property line of 801 Riverside Drive, westerly along a portion of said property line to the western property line of 801 Riverside Drive, southerly along portion of said property line to the northern property line of 779 Riverside Drive (aka 779-789 Riverside Drive), westerly along said property line to the western property line of 779 Riverside Drive (aka 779-789 Riverside Drive), southerly along said property line to the northern property line of 775 Riverside Drive (aka 773-777 Riverside Drive), westerly along a portion of said property line and along the northern property line of Manhattan Tax Map Block 2134 Lot 250 to the northeastern curbline of Riverside Drive West, southeasterly and easterly along said curbline, continuing easterly along the southern curbline of Riverside Drive, easterly across Riverside Drive to the eastern curbline of Riverside Drive, southerly along said curbline to its intersection with the northern curbline of West 155<sup>th</sup> Street, easterly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 780 Riverside Drive (aka 780-784 Riverside Drive; 635-639 West 155<sup>th</sup> Street), northerly along said property line and along the eastern property line of 788 Riverside Drive (aka 786-788 Riverside Drive; 640-642 West 156<sup>th</sup> Street) to the southern curbline of West 156<sup>th</sup> Street, easterly along said curbline to the point of the beginning.

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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.

The Audubon Park Historic District is comprised of 19 large apartment buildings and one duplex house. The apartments were built between 1905 and 1932 in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. Audubon Park is named for John James Audubon, a famous naturalist and illustrator of birds. In 1841, John James Audubon purchased approximately 20 acres of land overlooking the Hudson River. The estate came to be known as Audubon Park in the 1860s when Audubon's widow began selling off parcels of the estate for the development of free-standing single family homes.

The arrival of the IRT Broadway-Seventh Avenue subway line in 1904 contributed to the rapid development of the Washington Heights neighborhood. The apartments within the historic district were marketed as modern and elegant addresses in tradition of the grand houses in the neighborhoods of the Upper West Side and Morningside Heights to the south. Additionally, the buildings within the historic district were given names to recall the area's history and impart a sense of stature. The apartments range in height from five to thirteen stories and consist of the following architectural styles: Beaux Arts, Renaissance Revival, Mission, Mediterranean Revival, and Arts and Crafts.

Several of the buildings within the historic district, such as the Sutherland at 611 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street designed by Emory Roth and the Rivera at 790 Riverside Drive, exuberantly executed in the Beaux-Arts and Renaissance Revival styles and featuring light-colored materials including white, gray, and beige brick, terra cotta, and limestone. Elaborate cornices are generally of pressed metal and sometimes incorporate green Mission-style tile such as the Renaissance Revival style Grinnell at 800 Riverside Drive and the Mediterranean Revival style apartment house at 807 Riverside Drive. Other

styles seen within the historic district include the Medieval Revival style of Kannawah at 614 West 157<sup>th</sup> Street, which features elaborate molded terra-cotta window surrounds, stylized pinnacles, and keystones, and the Arts and Crafts style of Vauxhall at 780 Riverside Drive, which features creative use of faience tile friezes and decorative brickwork. Along the west side of Riverside Drive and along Riverside Drive West sit several fortress-like beige brick apartment buildings designed in a Medieval Revival style, featuring castellated parapet walls and molded terra-cotta arched entryways.

An additional feature of the large apartments of the historic district is the complex floor plans. The U-or H-shaped floor plans or the multiple wings lay out allowed for courtyards and maximum light and ventilation.

The Audubon Park Historic District is contained within an R8 zoning district, with an allowable FAR of 6.02. The historic district is north of the Audubon Terrace Historic District, which was designated in 1979.

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 or 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 June 17, 2009 (Calendar No. 28). There was one speaker, a representative of Manhattan Community Board 12, who spoke in favor of the designated historic district.

There were no other speakers on the application and the hearing was closed.

## **CONSIDERATION**

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Audubon 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 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 Chair**

**ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,**

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

**RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL, SHIRLEY A. McRAE, Commissioners**