



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 11, 2012 / Calendar No. 6

N 120369 HKK
CORRECTED

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 31, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Sears Roebuck & Co. Department Store, 2227-2323 Beverly Road (aka 2388-2420 Bedford Avenue) (Block 5133, part of Lot 14), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 15, 2012 (Designation List 455/LP-2469), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 14.

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 15, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Sears Roebuck & Company Department Store, located at 2227-2323 Beverly Road (aka 2388-2420 Bedford Avenue) (Block 5133, part of Lot 14), as a city landmark.

According to the Landmarks Preservation Commission's designation report, The Flatbush branch of Sears Roebuck & Company is an impressive late example of the Art Deco style. Located where Bedford Avenue and Beverly Road meet, this three-story retail structure was designed by the Chicago architects Nimmons, Carr & Wright, in association with Alton L. Craft of New York City. Sears announced plans to erect a large department store in Brooklyn in March 1932. Founded as a catalogue company in the early 1890s, it did not enter the retail market until 1925. Both Sears and its architect had little previous experience with chain store design. While the first branches to open featured classical ornamentation, by the late 1920s Sears had settled on a restrained yet stylish corporate image enlivened by Art Deco details. These stores were planned for the motoring age; most locations were convenient to major streets and customer parking was provided at no charge. To distinguish each branch from more utilitarian structures, most Sears stores featured a highly-visible tower with prominent signage on each side, as well as panels or thin bands of abstract two-dimensional relief that emphasized the placement of the original street entrances.

At the opening of the Flatbush store in November 1932, Eleanor Roosevelt addressed the audience. It was her last public appearance before Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected 32nd President of the United States. In spite of difficult economic times, the store was a great success and it provided considerable employment to Brooklyn residents. The building was significantly expanded in 1940, adding four seamless bays along Beverly Road, as well as additional square footage at the rear. Of the three large retail outlets that Sears opened in the metropolitan region during 1932, the Flatbush store is the only one that continues to operate. While much of the original fenestration is currently disguised by plastic panels and the large display windows have been removed, the street elevations are generally well preserved and retain their historic materials and characteristics.

The landmark site is located in a C4-2 zoning district. With an allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.4 for commercial uses, 2.43 for residential uses and 4.8 for community facility uses, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 583,613 square feet of commercial and residential floor area. The Sears Roebuck & Company Department Store contains approximately 175,875 square feet of floor area and is the only building on the lot. Therefore, there are approximately 407,738 square feet of floor area theoretically available for transfer.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a zoning 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 approximately thirty-five potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the 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.

**AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair,
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ORLANDO MARIN, Commissioners**