



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated July 8, 2016, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of Saint Paul Roman Catholic Church, 121 East 117th Street (Block 1645, Lot 7, in part) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 28, 2016 (Designation List No.488/LP-0291), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11.

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 28, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated Saint Paul Roman Catholic Church, located at 121 East 117th Street (Block 1645, Lot 7, in part), as a city landmark. The landmark site is located on the north side of East 117th Street between Park and Lexington avenues, within Manhattan Community District 11. The designated landmark site includes the church building and the steps and land upon which these improvements are sited and the adjacent alleyways and areaways, excluding the school building and play yard.

Saint Paul Roman Catholic Church, completed in 1908, is a significant example of the late Romanesque Revival style. Designed by the firm of Neville & Bagge, the church's façade incorporates both medieval and classical features. It is also historically significant as one of the earliest Roman Catholic parishes in Manhattan, serving East Harlem since 1834.

Dominating the street facade are symmetrical corner towers, an extraordinary row of five entry portals, and large round-arch stained-glass windows with simple geometric tracery. These dramatic windows on the front and side facades figure prominently in the design and their construction was facilitated by the building's structural use of steel and concrete. Typical Romanesque Revival features include round-arch openings, towers, steep roofs, and carved medieval-style ornamentation. The front facade is particularly distinguished with an unusual "row" of five round-arch molded portals that is reminiscent of medieval cathedrals. Since the

design is an early 20th-century interpretation of the Romanesque, it also exhibits such classical characteristics as symmetry, a smooth limestone facade, and a restrained use of ornament.

During most of the 19th-century and into the 1950s, many Catholics within the parish boundaries identified with an Irish heritage, and this was reflected in Saint Paul Church's congregation and activities. During the 20th-century, particularly after World War II, the demographics of the area changed with an influx of Spanish-speaking Catholics, many from Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Latin America. By the 1960s, the archdiocese and the parish responded to these changes and sponsored many cultural and social programs for East Harlem Latinos. Today, the building retains a remarkable level of integrity of its historic design and materials and continues to serve a diverse East Harlem community.

The landmark site is located within an R7-2 zoning district. With a maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.5, the 30,330-square-foot lot could be developed with approximately 197,145 square feet of floor area. The existing building on the lot contains 37,370 square feet, resulting in 159,775 square feet of unused development rights available for transfer under the existing zoning.

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. There are eleven (11) potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area, as all eligible lots comprising the potential receiving sites are currently underbuilt.

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 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 on any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

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