



June 22, 2011 / Calendar No. 20

N 110344 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 19, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Free Public Baths of the City of New York East 54th Street Bath and Gymnasium, 342-348 East 54th Street (Block 1346, Lot 32), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 10, 2011 (List No. 442/LP-2435).

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the New York 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 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 Free Public Baths of the City of New York East 54th Street Bath and Gymnasium (342-348 East 54th Street) is located on the east side of Midtown Manhattan on the south side of East 54th Street between First and Second Avenues in Community District 6.

The East 54th Street Bath and Gymnasium was completed in 1911 to serve the residents of the many tenement buildings on the east side of Manhattan which, at the turn of the 20th Century, lacked baths or showers. The impetus for the construction of public baths in New York City was an effort by the New York Association for the Improvement of the Poor and the City Mission Society that culminated in an 1895 law passed in the New York State Legislature mandating public baths for larger cities. The Bath and Gymnasium was used as public baths for approximately 27 years. With improvement in apartment design and the neighborhood becoming more upscale in the 1920s, the showers became underutilized and, in 1938, were removed so that the building could be renovated for use as a public gymnasium. The City still operates the Bath and Gymnasium today as a community recreation center.

The Bath and Gymnasium was designed by the firm of Werner & Windolph, which designed several other baths in New York City the early part of the 20th Century. Other works by the firm include the first of several houses built in Far Rockaway, the Union Club in the Bronx and a fieldstone estate house now part of the Douglaston Historic District in Queens.

The Bath and Gymnasium is noteworthy architecturally for its tripartite recessed arched openings which are divided by Doric columns on massive stone plinths. The plinths frame two stone stairways at the outermost bays. The columns have limestone capitals and are adorned with designs (dolphins & tridents). The columns support a massive modillioned cornice with three prominent recessed arches. The Bath and Gymnasium are built in the Classic Revival style with Arts and Crafts style details.

The landmark site is located in an R8B zoning district on a 7,530 square foot zoning lot. With an allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 4.0, the landmark site could be developed with approximately 30,120 square feet of floor area. The proposed landmark is developed with 20,907 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 9,213 square feet of floor area available 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 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 approximately six 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.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman

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