



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

June 3, 2015 / Calendar No. 8

N 150353 HKK

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated April 24, 2015, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Brooklyn Public Library Stone Avenue Branch, 581 Stone Avenue aka 581-591 Mother Gaston Boulevard (Block 3794, Lot 18), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on April 14, 2015 (Designation List 480/LP-2568), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 16.

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 April 14, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Brooklyn Public Library Stone Avenue Branch, located at 581 Stone Avenue aka 581-591 Mother Gaston Boulevard (Block 3794, Lot 18), as a city landmark. The landmark site is a corner lot located at the southeast intersection of Mother Gaston Boulevard and Dumont Avenue in the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn Community District 16.

Established in 1892, the Brooklyn Public Library opened its first branch in 1897, and in 1901, planned to construct 20 additional branches throughout Brooklyn. The expansion was funded as part of Andrew Carnegie's contributions to the New York City branch library system.

Two Carnegie libraries were built in Brownsville, the first was the Brownsville Branch and the second was the Brooklyn Public Library Stone Avenue Branch, originally known as the Brownsville Children's Library. The Children's Library was constructed in 1913-1914 to ease overcrowding at the first branch and to provide a space for children, making it the first children's library in the country. The designs for the branches were developed by the Architects' Advisory

Commission to the Carnegie Committee. William B. Tubby, a prolific architect in Brooklyn and member of the Advisory Commission, was responsible for the design of the Stone Avenue Branch.

The freestanding red tapestry brick building was designed in the Jacobean Revival style, which combines a variety of architectural styles including Gothic and Renaissance. The Stone Avenue Branch features many elements typical of the style, including a squat corner tower with projecting bay windows and two recessed entrances, a decorative crenellated parapet, multi-paned windows, and the use of brick and limestone for the façade. Ornament depicting the building's original use as a children's library include stone carvings of characters from children's literature.

In 1929, the Brownsville Children's Library opened to teenagers and local organizations, and shortly thereafter, was recognized as an outstanding juvenile institution in the United States. Post-World War II, the neighborhood underwent a significant change in population, and library service was extended to all ages and became known as the Stone Avenue Branch. In 1981, Heritage House, a local cultural institution founded by community activist Rosetta Gaston, located on the second floor of the Stone Avenue Branch. It remains today.

The building is located in the Brownsville neighborhood, and faces the south side of Dumont Avenue. Building types and uses on the subject block and surrounding neighborhood are typified by tower in the park-style housing developments and one- to three-story community facility buildings. There are two subway stations (Junius Street, Livonia Avenue) located within four blocks of the proposed landmark.

Situated in a R6 zoning district (max 2.43 FAR for residential use, max 4.8 for community facility use), the landmark building is located on a 10,000 square foot lot, which allows a maximum development of 48,000 square feet of floor area on the site. The lot is currently

developed with 11,340 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 36,660 square feet of unused development rights.

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 building. There are four 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.

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