



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 7, 2009 / Calendar No. 19

N 090217 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 24, 2008, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of University Village (Block 524, Lot 1 and p/o Lot 66), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 18, 2008 (List No. 407/LP-2300), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 2.

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 of the subject property, 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.

University Village is comprised of a five-acre superblock generally bounded by Bleecker Street to the north, West Houston Street to the south, LaGuardia Place to the west, and a line approximately 220 feet to the west of Mercer Street to the east. University Village consists of three apartment towers, 100 and 110 Bleecker Street, aka Silver Towers I and II; and 505 LaGuardia Place. The three buildings were constructed between 1964 and 1967. I. M. Pei & Associates was the architect for the project with James Ingo Freed serving as chief designer.

NYU acquired the site in 1960. The complex includes three identical free-standing 30-story towers executed in reinforced concrete that are positioned at the center of the site in a “pinwheel” configuration around a 100-by-100 foot lawn. The buildings were arranged to maximize views and privacy, as well as to increase general visual interest. Cast in place, on site, using fiberglass molds, the

buff-colored towers fall into the general stylistic category known as “Brutalism” and reflect the influence of the Le Corbusier, whom Pei admired. The buildings display twin sets of smooth gridded facades that project from a central core. Each floor has four or eight deeply-recessed horizontal window bays, as well as a 22-foot-wide sheer wall, creating strong contrasts of light and shadow. Near the center of the complex stands a large sandblasted concrete sculpture, titled ‘Bust of Sylvette’, which is an enlargement of a 1954 cubistic work by Pablo Picasso. The off-center placement of the 36-foot tall bust echoes and enhances the project’s dynamic plan.

The landmark site is located in an R7-2 district. With an allowable FAR of 3.44, the maximum allowable floor area is 747,347 square feet. The buildings on the entire zoning lot currently contain 782,741 square feet or 3.6 FAR. Since the landmark site is built above the allowable floor area ratio, there are no development rights. Since the landmark site is built above the allowable floor area ratio, there are no development rights which may be available for transfer pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution.

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.

There are no projected public improvements or plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

The subject landmark designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair
IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, AIA, BETTY Y. CHEN,
MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL,
SHIRLEY A. McRAE, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioners