



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 14, 2019 / Calendar No. 20

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 27, 2019, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Sunset Park North Historic District designation, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 18, 2019 (Designation List No. 513/LP-2625). The Sunset Park North Historic District consist of the properties bounded by a line beginning on the southern curbline of 44th Street at a point on a line extending northerly from the western property line of 514 44th Street, extending easterly along the southern curbline of 44th Street across Sixth Avenue and continuing along the southern curbline of 44th Street to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 682 44th Street, southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 682 44th Street, westerly along the southern property lines of 682 through 602 44th Street and a line extending westerly across Sixth Avenue to the southern property line of 4404 Sixth Avenue (aka 4402-4412 Sixth Avenue, 580 44th Street), westerly along the southern property lines of 4404 Sixth Avenue (aka 4402-4412 Sixth Avenue, 580 44th Street) and 574 through 514 44th Street, and northerly along the western property line of 514 44th Street to the place of beginning, Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 7.

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 18, 2019, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Sunset Park North Historic District (the “District”) (List No. 513/LP-2625). The District consists of over 50 buildings along 44th Street between Fifth and Seventh Avenues in Sunset Park, Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 7.

The District is developed with two cohesive rows of two-story, two-family houses constructed for working- and middle-class families at the turn of the 20th century. It contains buildings of two distinct styles, both of which were inspired by Renaissance Revival architecture. The row houses located at 614-682 44th Street were built in 1903, and consist of modest brick-faced homes with simple door hoods and restrained stone trim, while the row houses located at 514-560 44th Street were built in 1903-1908 and are considerably grander, containing limestone facades, full-height rounded bays, and carved classical ornaments. The District also contains four-story flats houses

built between 1913 and 1914. According to the LPC report, the District appears much as it did in the early 20th century. The District represents one of the most cohesive collections of well-preserved historic row houses and flats buildings in the neighborhood and contains two of its most distinctive streetscapes overlooking Sunset Park.

Sunset Park developed rapidly between 1903 and 1914, spurred by funding for infrastructure and transportation improvements. The opening of the Fifth Avenue Elevated Railroad to 36th Street, and its subsequent electrification and extension across the Brooklyn Bridge between 1899 and 1901, served as additional catalysts for development. In the early 20th century, the opening of Bush Terminal and a boom in shipping and manufacturing businesses also contributed to the growth of the District.

Most of the District's early residents were immigrants from Ireland, Hungary, Scotland, and Italy, as well as Eastern European Jews. The District also saw an influx of Norwegian and Syrian immigrants, and, by the 1910s, the District sat on the edge of the community known as "Finntown," home to approximately 10,000 Finnish residents. In 1916, members of the community formed the first nonprofit housing cooperative in the country, and by 1922, 20 buildings were part of this affordable housing cooperative, including the flats houses at 566, 570, and 574 44th Street and 4404 Sixth Avenue, which were converted to co-ops between 1920 and 1922. The two-family houses in the District made homeownership attainable to working- and middle-class families by enabling them to easily rent out their second floors to help cover expenses.

The District lies within R6A and R6B zoning districts. The District is zoned R6B in the middle portions of blocks to preserve the area's traditional row house character. R6B is a contextual district that facilitates the development of four- to five-story buildings that permit a maximum residential and community facility floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.0 and maximum building height of 50 feet or 55 feet with a qualifying ground floor of at least 13 feet. A portion of the District is zoned R6A. R6A is a contextual district that allows a maximum residential and community facility FAR of 3.0 and maximum building height of 70 feet or 75 feet with a qualifying ground floor of at least 13 feet.

The surrounding area is comprised primarily of mid-density residential uses within R6A and R6B zoning districts, as well as commercial overlays . C2-4 commercial overlays are mapped to a depth of 100 feet along Fifth and Seventh Avenues. C2-4 commercial overlays, which are typically mapped along streets that serve local retail needs, allow a maximum commercial FAR of 2.0. The neighborhood's namesake park is directly to the north of the District.

There are three other Historic Districts within proximity to the District to be concurrently designated: Sunset Park 50th Street, Central Sunset Park, and Sunset Park South.

On May 7, 2019, the LPC held a public hearing on the proposed designation of District (Public Hearing Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law. Twenty-six people spoke in favor of the proposed designation, including the Council Member representing the 38th District and representatives from the Historic Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Society for the Architecture of the City, and the Sunset Park Business Improvement District. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation.

The Commission also received 43 written messages in favor of the proposed designation, including from the Assembly Member representing the 51st District, and one written message in opposition to the proposed designation.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, no transfer of development rights is permitted from any structure within a historic district. All landmark buildings within the District are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed district on July 31, 2019 (Calendar No. 36). One speaker, a representative

of the Historic Districts Council, spoke in support of the application based on the district's architectural merit and urban design. The speaker also spoke to the omission in the designation of the multi-family buildings along 4th Avenue which, she believed, contribute to the area's sense of place. There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the District in relation to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements and plans for the development, growth and improvements in the vicinity of the area involved. The Commission believes that the designation of the District is consistent with plans for the area's future development and improvement. The District does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. The Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject Historic District designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the District.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

KENNETH J. KNUCKES, ESQ., *Vice Chairman*

DAVID BURNEY, ALLEN P. CAPPELLI, ESQ., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,

MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ, JOSEPH DOUEK, RICHARD W. EADDY,

HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARIN,

LARISA ORTIZ, RAJ RAMPERSHAD, *Commissioners*