



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 12, 2011 / Calendar No. 4

N 120099 HKK

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 7, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of St. Casimir's Roman Catholic Church (now the Paul Robeson Theater), 40 Greene Avenue (Block 1957, Lot 28), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 25, 2011 (Designation List 449/LP-2476), Borough of Brooklyn, 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, 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 October 25, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the St. Casimir's Roman Catholic Church (now the Paul Robeson Theater), located at 40 Greene Avenue (Block 1957, part of Lot 28), as a city landmark.

According to the Landmarks Preservations Commission's designation report, the Rundbogenstil (Round Arch style) building at 40 Greene Avenue, originally named the Church of the Redeemer, was erected c. 1864 for the Fourth Universalist Society possibly to the design of the architect Rembrandt Lockwood. The building remained its home until 1870 when Temple Israel, one of Brooklyn's first Reform congregations, purchased the structure and converted it into a synagogue. Having outgrown the building after 20 years, Temple Israel sold it to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn in 1890. The brownstone-fronted building, described in 1870 as being "modest as to size, ornaments and decorations" was enlarged with the addition of an apse and steeple before its dedication as the new home of St. Casimir's Roman Catholic Church, a parish founded in 1875 to tend to the spiritual needs of Brooklyn's Polish population. St. Casimir's occupied the church on Greene Avenue until 1980 when it was merged with Our Lady of Czestochowa, another Polish parish. That year Dr. Josephine English, an African-American physician and community activist purchased the building, converting it into The Paul Robeson Theatre to provide the community with greater access to the arts. This early Brooklyn church building is a significant example of the Rundbogenstil and an important reflection of the

borough's rich religious and cultural history. The building is located in the Fort Greene neighborhood in an area typified by 3-4 story rowhouses, 6-12 story apartment buildings and community facility uses.

The landmark site is located in an R6B zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.0, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 8,334 square feet of floor area. St. Casimir's Roman Catholic Church (now the Paul Robeson Theatre) contains approximately 12,500 square feet of floor area. Since the landmark site is built at or 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.

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.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair

ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,

BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY,

ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARIN, Commissioners

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman, abstaining