



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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April 7, 2021 / Calendar No. 14

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated February 11, 2021, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House, 227 Duffield Street (Block 146, Lot 15) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 2, 2021 (List No. 522/LP No. 2645), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 2.

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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 February 11, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House, 227 Duffield Street (Block 146, Lot 15), as a City landmark. The landmark site is located on an interior lot on the east side of Duffield Street between Fulton and Willoughby streets in Downtown Brooklyn, Community District 2.

The Harriet and Thomas Truesdell House was built between 1848-1851 in the Greek Revival style that populated the streets of pre-Civil War Brooklyn. Robert Bonnell or Caleb H. and Amelia Baldwin may have built the house during this timeframe, but neither the builder nor architect has been officially determined. According to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Truesdell House is historically significant for its association with Brooklyn abolitionists, Harriet (1786-1862) and Thomas (1789-1874) Truesdell, who resided there for more than a decade before the Civil War. Both Thomas and Harriet were active participants in antislavery organizations for many years, first while living in Rhode Island and later in Brooklyn. Thomas and Harriet Truesdell were not only active sympathizers in the movement that opposed slavery,

but also co-founders and members of several anti-slavery organizations during the pre-Civil War years. The Truesdell House remained in their family for 70 years before being sold.

The Truesdell House was originally a three-story residence influenced by the Greek Revival style and was part of a row of similar brick and frame houses along Duffield Street. It included a raised basement and porches on the front and rear of the house, but they were removed in the early 1900's. The house was altered again in 1933 with a two-story brick commercial extension in the front yard. Today it is the last row house on the block.

The site is mapped with a C6-4.5 zoning district and is within the Special Downtown Brooklyn District (SDBD), the third largest Central Business District in the city. C6-4.5 zoning districts are high density commercial districts mapped within central locations including Midtown Manhattan and Downtown Brooklyn and have an R10 residential equivalent, allowing a mix of office, residential, hotel, community facility, and entertainment uses. Within the SDBD, C6-4.5 zoning districts allow a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for commercial uses and community facilities up to 12.0 FAR and permit residential uses 10.0-12.0 FAR, if participating in the Voluntary Inclusionary Housing program or for the provision of open space or transit improvements. Given the site's location along Duffield Street, a narrow street, and the small lot size, new construction would be required to set back at least 15 feet on the ground floor street line. C6-4.5 zoning districts are governed by either standard height and setback regulations, which include a maximum base height of 125 feet and a maximum building height of 250 feet, or by tower regulations which are based on maximum percentage of lot coverage and have no maximum building height. However, the site's location along Willoughby Square requires that at least 70 percent of the building must be located along the lot line with the open space and must rise to a minimum height of 80 feet before setting back at 85 feet in height.

Pursuant to allowable zoning, the 2,174-square-foot lot could be developed with approximately 26,088 square feet of floor area. The existing building on the lot contains 2,898 square feet of floor area, for an FAR of 1.33, resulting in 23,190 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.

**MARISA LAGO, *Chairman***

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