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November 18, 2020 / Calendar No. 9

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated September 29, 2020, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Public School 48 (now P75Q at P.S. 48, The Robert E. Peary School) (Block 10144, Lot 42), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on September 22, 2020 (Designation List No.519/LP-2646), Borough of Queens, Community District 12.

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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 September 22, 2020, the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) designated Public School (PS) 48 as a City Landmark. The landmark site is located at the northwest corner of 155<sup>th</sup> Street and 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Block 10144, Lot 42), in the South Jamaica neighborhood of Queens, Community District 12. Built in 1936, PS 48 is an early example of the Art Deco architecture style that is particularly unique for an elementary school. The school was designed by architect Walter C. Martin, Superintendent of School Buildings for the New York City Board of Education from 1928 until 1938. During his tenure, Martin was responsible for designing 34 elementary schools and five high schools throughout Queens.

The design of the building was influenced by the use of the Art Deco style in industrial and commercial architecture of the period, incorporating decorative features expressive of its educational function. The three-story building has two primary, street-facing facades, a side facade facing the athletic courts of adjacent Marconi Park, and a rear facade facing a driveway and a new school building, constructed between 2008 and 2010.

PS 48 was executed in light tan brick, laid in Flemish bond along the front and side elevations, with limestone trim over a granite base and features wide window bays separated by brick piers, deep red brick detailing at the spandrels, and stylized terra-cotta decoration. Although the building has undergone minor alterations since 1936, it remains mostly intact and operates as an educational facility that is maintained by the Department of Education. The historic site also features landscaped areaways on the north and west sides of the building, a paved south areaway, and a partially paved east areaway. The north areaway includes a slate-paved path. Historic site elements include wrought-iron areaway fences and gates, basement window wells with concrete borders and metal grilles, and utilitarian cellar hatches with diamond-plate covers.

The building is made architecturally significant by its intact Art Deco facade and is culturally significant for its historic use as an academic institution that has served Jamaica for over 70 years. PS 48 was originally located in a wood frame schoolhouse from 1886 through 1936, and served as the segregated all-Black school in Jamaica before New York State ended school segregation in 1900. Efforts to replace the old schoolhouse began in 1905, but construction on the existing PS 48 building did not begin until 27 years later.

The landmark building is located in an R4A zoning district, which allows a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.75 for residential use. The 28,010-square-foot zoning lot could be developed with up to 21,007.50 square feet of floor area, but the zoning lot is overbuilt and contains 35,450 square feet of floor area and, therefore, has no unused development rights available for transfer. Because the landmark site is located within an R4A zoning district, it is also not eligible for the transfer of development rights pursuant to Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 74-79.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the ZR, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers upon application to the Landmark Preservation Commission.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the ZR. 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**, *Chair*

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