



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 16, 2011 / Calendar No. 15

N 110183 HKK

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 22, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Coney Island Theatre, 1301 Surf Avenue (Block 7064, Lot 16), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on December 14, 2010 (Designation List No. 436/LP-2408), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 13.

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 December 14, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Coney Island Theatre, located at 1301 Surf Avenue (Block 7064, Lot 16), as a city landmark.

The landmark site at 1301 Stillwell Avenue is located on the north side of Surf Avenue between Stillwell Avenue and W 15th Street, in the Special Coney Island District, in Brooklyn Community District 13. The neo-Renaissance Revival-style, seven-story theatre and office building is one of the largest, most substantial structures in Coney Island and originally featured both live performances and motion picture screenings.

The theatre was built by Chanin Construction Company, designed by the architectural firm of Reilly & Hall, and leased to Loew's theatre chain. The building's construction in 1925 represented the optimistic attitude of the period for the successful development of Coney Island as a year-round family-friendly entertainment district, a departure from the somewhat seedy aura it had developed in the 19th century. Faced with brick and terracotta and highlighted by stone and terracotta details, this structure presents a grand and substantial counterpoint to Coney Island's more modest one- and two-story buildings.

The Coney Island Theatre was operated by Loew's Incorporated until 1964, with ground-floor spaces occupied by retail shops and restaurants, and offices on the upper floors. By the 1970's the theatre became an adult film venue. The building has also been occupied by a bingo parlor

and Kansas Fried Chicken, while the upper-floor office spaces were used for dress manufacture, a Medicaid office, and a Head Start Nursery program. The building is currently vacant.

The proposed landmark site is located in a R7X/C2-4 zoning district; the maximum FAR for the landmark site in this district is 5.0, pursuant to the inclusionary housing program. The subject building has 115,667 square feet of floor area on a zoning lot that has 18,873 square feet of lot area (6.13 FAR).

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. Because the proposed landmark site is currently overbuilt, there are no unused development rights available for transfer under the existing zoning. 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
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