



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 11, 2012 / Calendar No. 10

N 120368 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 31, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Van Tassell and Kearney Auction Mart, 126-128 East 13th Street (Block 558, Lot 43 in part), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 15, 2012 (Designation List No. 455/LP-2205), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 3.

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 May 15, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Van Tassell & Kearney Auction Mart, located at 126-128 East 13th Street (Block 558, Lot 43 in part), as a city landmark.

The landmark site at 126-128 East 13th Street is located on the south side of East 13th Street, between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue, approximately two blocks southeast of Union Square Park. It is close to a number of Manhattan neighborhoods, including the East Village, NoHo and Greenwich Village.

Built around 1903-1904, this three-story, Beaux-Arts-style structure is one of the last remaining in the City built for the purpose of staging horse auctions. Designed by Jardine, Kent & Jardine, the prominent successor firm to Jardine & Jardine, the building's symmetrical and well-proportioned Beaux-Arts design reflects a clear awareness of architectural trends in Paris and New York City. The 50-foot-wide red brick facade terminates in a rounded cornice, following the curve of a central arched window.

The building was commissioned by the son of Edward Kearney, one of the firm's founders. It was envisioned as a way to reposition the firm as a destination in the city for purchasing expensive horses and vehicles by attracting a wealthy clientele. A large "sales ring", a shed-like space within the mezzanine hosted weekly auctions. After 1904, Van Tassell & Kearney, which had begun as a general auctioneering firm, was focused on "high class" show horses and ponies.

Beginning around 1910, as horse auctions declined and automobiles became more available to the general public, sales became less frequent at the Auction Mart. Around 1918, the firm shifted its focus to the sales of second-hand automobiles and, beginning around the late 1920s, the building began to be used for candy manufacturing. Most recently, until 2005, the building had been used by the painter and sculptor Frank Stella as a studio and it is today occupied by the Peridance Capezio Dance Center.

The landmark site is located in a C6-2A zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.0, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 43,002 square feet of floor area. The Van Tassell & Kearney Auction Mart building contains approximately 11,777 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 31,225 square feet theoretically available for transfer.

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 or one which is across the street and opposite to the 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 three 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.

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