



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 16, 2009, Calendar No. 11

N 100130 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated October 15, 2009, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Lamartine Place Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 13, 2009 (List No. 419, LP No. 2324). The district boundaries are: bounded by a line beginning at the southeast corner of the lot of No. 333 West 29th Street, extending northerly along the eastern side of the lot to the northern property line of No. 333 West 29th Street, then extending westerly along the northern property lines of No. 333 to No. 355 West 29th Street, then extending southerly along the western property line of No. 355 West 29th Street, to the southern curb line of West 29th Street, then easterly along the southern curb line in front of Nos. 355 to No. 333 West 29th Street, to a point in said curb line formed by a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of no. 333 West 29th Street, then northerly across the sidewalk, to the point of beginning, Community District 4, Borough of Manhattan.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) and (b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of the 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 13, 2009, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Lamartine Place Historic District (List No. 419, LP No. 2324). The Lamartine Place Historic District consists of 12 buildings on a portion of one block in Manhattan, Community District 4. The Lamartine Place Historic District is generally bounded by West 28th and West 27th Streets to the north, Tenth Avenue to the east, West 25th Street to the south, and the West Side Highway to the west.

The 12 buildings of the Lamartine Place Historic District were part of a block-long row on West 29th Street that stretched between Eighth and Ninth avenues. The four- and five-story brick rowhouses, designed predominantly in the Greek Revival style with Renaissance Revival style elements, were constructed by developers William Torrey and Cyrus Mason for middle-class families. The street was named after Alphonse de Lamartine, a French writer and politician who was active in the French Revolution of 1848, to distinguish it from the numbered street grid.

The rowhouses attracted a number of influential New Yorkers at the time, including Abigail Hopper Gibbons and her husband, James Sloan Gibbons, both noted abolitionists who lived at 339 W. 29th Street from 1852 until 1866. Mrs. Gibbons was the daughter of Isaac T. Hopper, a Quaker prison reform advocate who helped escaped slaves in Philadelphia before moving to New York in 1829.

The Gibbons home was not only a meeting place for abolitionists, but also an established stop on the Underground Railroad, providing refuge to slaves fleeing to Canada. The Gibbonses were strong and well-known supporters of President Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, which they believed would bring an end to slavery. After President Lincoln delivered the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, the Gibbonses draped 339 W. 29th Street in bunting, triggering an attack on the building by emancipation opponents.

In July 1863, four months after Congress enacted a national draft to increase the number of federal soldiers fighting in the war, a lottery held in New York to select new recruits touched off four days of riots in which hundreds of people were killed, and thousands injured. More than 100 buildings were destroyed by fire and another 200 damaged, including the Gibbons home, which was burned and ransacked. Two of the Gibbons daughters escaped the fire and mob by climbing over neighboring roofs to safety before escaping through 355 West 29th Street.

The Lamartine Place Historic District is located in an R8B zoning district. The R8B district has a maximum FAR of 4.0 and permits residential and community facility uses. The maximum building height for the R8B district is 75 feet.

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, no transfer of development rights is permitted from any structure within an historic district. 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.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on December 2, 2009 (Calendar No. 12). There were no speakers, and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Lamartine Place Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements and plans for the development, growth and improvements in the vicinity of the area involved. The historic district designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal within the historic district or surrounding area.

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