



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 3, 2007/Calendar No. 16

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated August 21, 2007 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Highbridge Play Center, Amsterdam Avenue between West 172nd and West 173rd Street (Block 2106, p/o Lot 1), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on August 14, 2007 (List No. 395/LP-2237), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 12

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 August 14, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Highbridge Play Center, as a city landmark. The landmark designation includes the bath house, wading, diving and swimming pools, comfort station, perimeter walls, terracing and fencing, and the previously designated Water Tower and its Landmark Site.

The Highbridge Play Center is located on the east side of Amsterdam Avenue between West 172nd and West 173rd streets. Designed by a team of architects, engineers and landscape architects headed by Aymar Embury II and Gilmore D. Clarke, the center was built during the 1935-1936 period.

The Highbridge Pool, which anchors the Highbridge Play Center, was one of eleven immense pools opened in the 1930's that used funds provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The pool and surrounding park were built by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, as part of a comprehensive government-sponsored effort to provide modern recreation facilities throughout the city.

Comprising 2.5 acres, the play center was sited on a former city reservoir that was built in 1870, as part of the Croton water supply system. The landmark site includes the Water Tower, which

was built in 1872. The Water Tower, also designated as a city landmark, served a key role in the city's water distribution system during the 19th and early 20th centuries

The play center's pools, built to accommodate 4,880 swimmers, are complemented by a distinctive bath house, perimeter walls, terracing and fencing, of which all have prominent decorative elements.

The designated landmark is located within designated parkland. Therefore, Sections 74-79 and 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution are not applicable.

The Commission notes that since the landmark is city-owned, the Landmarks Preservation Commission would issue an advisory report rather than a permit for any proposed alteration to the play center.

There are no projected public improvements or plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

The subject landmark designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

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