



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 7, 2008/Calendar No. 1

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 8, 2007, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 30, 2007 (List No. 397, LP No.2264). The district boundaries are:

properties bounded by a line beginning at northeast corner of Greenpoint Avenue and West Street, then extending northerly along the eastern curbline of West Street to the southern curbline of Kent Street, then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending southerly from the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then extending northerly across Kent Street and along the western property line of 59-63 Kent Street, then easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, southerly along a portion of the eastern property line of 59-63 Kent Street, easterly along a portion of the northern property line of 59-63 Kent Street to a point in said property line formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the easternmost building line of 59-63 Kent Street, then southerly along a line extending to the southern curbline of Kent Street (including all light wells on the eastern side of 59-63 Kent Street), then easterly along the southern curbline of Kent Street to a point on said curbline formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 76 Kent Street, then southerly along the eastern property lines of 76 Kent Street and 47-61 Greenpoint Avenue to the northern curbline of Greenpoint Avenue, then westerly along said curbline to the point of beginning, Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 1.

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 October 30, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) unanimously designated the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company Historic District (List 397, LP-2264). Located in Brooklyn Community District 1, the subject historic district is generally bounded by Greenpoint Avenue, West Street, Java Street, and Franklin Avenue, in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn, Community District 1.

The Eberhard Faber Historic District comprises nine buildings on two city blocks, all of which

were owned and operated by the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company (Eberhard Faber) at some point. Eberhard Faber began producing pencils in Stein, Germany, as early as 1761 and began operations in New York City around 1850. Eberhard Faber moved into the building at 106 West Street, on the corner of West and Kent Streets in 1872 after a fire in their Manhattan factory. Over the next half century, Eberhard Faber expanded their operations to the remainder of the historic district, acquiring or constructing buildings as they reached national prominence as a producer of various types of office supplies.

The buildings within the historic district were built between 1860 and 1924. Most are built of brick with some cast iron lintels and other trims. Eberhard Faber enlarged several buildings and added many of the distinctive architectural details after construction. According to the LPC, many of the buildings “are excellent examples of the American industrial interpretation of the German Renaissance Revival or Rundbogenstil style.” In America, this style often used segmental-headed window openings, pediments and parapets, and corbelling, patterning, and other decorative brickwork. Decorative brickwork and pediments ornamented with Eberhard Faber’s trademark diamond-and-star logo recur frequently in the buildings of the historic district. Perhaps the most iconic building, at 47-61 Greenpoint Avenue, was built in 1923-4 of reinforced concrete in the Art Deco style. Its large yellow terra cotta pencils adorning the upper floor façade are recognized throughout the neighborhood. When operated by Eberhard Faber, several of the buildings were interconnected, including the building north of Kent Street, by a bridge over Kent Street at the fourth floor.

Eberhard Faber closed the plant within the historic district in 1956. The buildings were separated and acquired by separate owners and have been used for various commercial, and industrial uses since. One building at 58-70 Kent Street was partially demolished in the mid-twentieth century, though the remaining front wall still incorporates some of the original historic fabric, including the brick cornice, cast iron lintels, and fenestration characteristic of the German Renaissance Revival Style.

Most of the historic district is zoned M1-1, which permits industrial and commercial uses to a floor area ratio of 1.0 and community facility uses to a FAR of 2.4. The remainder of the district

(one building north of Kent Street) is zoned MX8:M1-2/R6A, with a 2.0 FAR for manufacturing and commercial uses and 3.0 FAR for residential and community facility uses.

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 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 19, 2007 (Calendar No. 39).

There were four speakers in favor of the application representing various organizations including the Municipal Arts Society, the Historic Districts Council, and the New York Industrial Retention Network. There were no speakers in opposition and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Eberhard Faber Pencil Company 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 proposed historic district does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal within the historic district or surrounding area.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman

IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO, RICHARD W. EADDY, JOHN MEROLO, KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioners

SHIRLEY McRAE, Commissioner ABSTAINED