



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 10, 2008/Calendar No. 11

N 090044 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated July 24, 2008, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the West Chelsea Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on July 15, 2008 (List No. 404, LP No. 2302) district boundaries are:

property bounded by a line beginning at the intersection of the northern curbline of West 28th Street and the eastern curbline of the West Side Highway (aka Joe DiMaggio Highway, Twelfth Avenue), extending easterly along the northern curbline of West 28th Street to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 548-552 West 28th Street (aka 547-553 West 27th Street), continuing southerly across the roadbed, along said property line, and across the roadbed to the southern curbline of West 27th Street, easterly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 536-542 West 27th Street, southerly along said property line to the southern property line of 534 West 27th Street, easterly along said property line and the southern property lines of 532 through 516 West 27th Street, to the western property line of 510-514 West 27th Street, northerly along said property line to the southern curbline of West 27th Street, easterly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 510-514 West 27th Street, southerly along said property line to the southern property line of 510-514 West 27th Street, westerly along a portion of said property line to the eastern property line of 513 West 26th Street, southerly along said property line and across the roadbed to the northern curbline of West 26th Street, easterly along said curbline to the western curbline of Tenth Avenue, southerly along said curbline and across the roadbed to the southern curbline of West 25th Street, westerly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 210-218 Eleventh Avenue (aka 564-568 West 25th Street), southerly along said property line to the southern property line of 210-218 Eleventh Avenue (aka 564-568 West 25th Street), westerly along said property line to the eastern curbline of Eleventh Avenue, northerly along said curbline and across the roadbed to the northern curbline of West 25th Street, easterly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with the western property line of 551-555 West 25th Street, northerly along said property line to the northern property line of 551-555 West 25th Street, easterly along said property line and the property lines of 549 through 543 West 25th Street to the western property line of 518-534 West 26th Street, northerly along said property line to the southern curbline of West 26th Street, westerly along said curbline and across the roadbed to the western curbline of Eleventh Avenue, southerly along said curbline to a point formed by its intersection with a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 239-243 Eleventh Avenue (aka 600-626 West 26th Street), westerly along said property line to the western property line of 239-243 Eleventh Avenue (aka 600-626 West 26th Street), northerly along said property line to

the southern curblin of West 26th Street, westerly along said curblin to the eastern curblin of the West Side Highway (aka Joe DiMaggio Highway, Twelfth Avenue), northerly across the roadbed and along said curblin to the point of the beginning.

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 July 15, 2008, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the West Chelsea Historic District (List No. 404, LP No. 2302). The West Chelsea Historic District consists of 30 buildings and comprises portions of 7 blocks adjacent to the Hudson River waterfront in Manhattan, Community District 4. The West Chelsea Historic District is generally bounded by West 28th Street and West 27th Street to the north, Tenth Avenue to the east, West 25th Street to the south, and the West Side Highway to the west.

The West Chelsea Historic District is a rare surviving example of New York City's rapidly disappearing industrial neighborhoods. During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the area was home to some of the city's and the country's most prestigious industrial firms. The Otis Elevator Company, the Cornell Iron Works, the John Williams Ornamental Bronze and Iron Works, and the Reynolds Metal Company all had a presence in West Chelsea.

This waterfront area first developed as a mixture of working-class residences and industrial complexes beginning in the late 1840s, at the moment when Manhattan was becoming the most important manufacturing center in the United States. Rows of simple tenements were erected in close proximity to large iron works, lumber and coal yards, steam-powered saw mills, and stone dressing operations. Many

of the goods produced by the neighborhood's manufacturers were purchased locally by the city's burgeoning construction industry. West Chelsea experienced a second wave of development around the turn of the twentieth century. By the 1920s, nearly all of the area's original small-scale buildings had been replaced with larger, more substantial industrial structures.

The pace of redevelopment in West Chelsea quickened during the second decade of the twentieth century as new industries moved into the neighborhood. In 1914 *The New York Times* proclaimed the area between West 23rd and West 42nd Streets the new center of the city's printing industry. In addition to its manufacturing operations, West Chelsea also became a major center of warehousing and freight handling activity beginning in the late nineteenth century.

The West Chelsea Historic District includes three zoning districts, M2-3, M1-5 and C6-3, and portions of the historic district lie within the Special West Chelsea District. Located west of Eleventh Avenue, the M2-3 district has a maximum FAR of 2.0 and permits manufacturing and commercial uses. Found in the midblocks between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, and west of Eleventh Avenue south of West 26th Street, the M1-5 district has a maximum FAR of 5.0 and permits manufacturing, commercial and selected community facility uses. The M1-5 district east of Eleventh Avenue is within the Special West Chelsea District and also permits museums and commercial art galleries. The west block frontages of Tenth Avenue and the east block frontages of Eleventh Avenue are zoned C6-3, and are within the Special West Chelsea District. The base FAR of the C6-3 in the special district is 5.0, with a maximum FAR of 7.5. Commercial, residential and community facility uses are permitted in this district. New development within the M1-5 and C6-3 districts in the Special West Chelsea District is also subject to certain height and setback requirements.

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 August 27, 2008 (Calendar No. 37). There were two speakers in favor and two speakers in opposition.

A member of Community Board 4 spoke in favor of the designation and described the character of the historic district and the historic buildings found within. The Director of Planning for the Manhattan Borough President expressed the Manhattan Borough President's support for the historic district.

A representative of a warehouse building in the historic district on the northwest corner of Eleventh Avenue and West 27th Street spoke in opposition of the designation. He stated he would like residential uses to be permitted on this site. A lawyer also representing the warehouse building stated his opposition and requested the Commission study the current zoning west of Eleventh Avenue.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the West Chelsea 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 Commission believes that the historic district would not conflict with the construction of the High Line Park. Though the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) does have jurisdiction over the section of the Park that falls within the district boundaries, the city's Design (formerly Art) Commission has approved the Parks Department design for this section of the park, and therefore, that design is grandfathered and does not require LPC review. For future construction on the High Line, the Commission notes that since it is city-owned, the Landmarks Preservation Commission would issue an advisory report rather than a permit for any proposed alteration.

The Commission also believes the historic district is consistent with plans for the area's future development and improvement.

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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