



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 2, 2016, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of 400 Madison Avenue (Block 1283, Lot 17), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 22, 2016 (Designation List No. 490/LP-2576), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

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 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 November 22, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated 400 Madison Avenue as a City landmark. The landmark site, at 400 Madison Avenue (Block 1283, Lot 17), is located on the west side of Madison Avenue, between East 47th and East 48th Streets, in the East Midtown neighborhood of Community District 5.

The building at 400 Madison Avenue, completed in 1929, was designed by H. Craig Severance and constructed by the George A. Fuller Company—one of the nation’s most experienced skyscraper builders. This 21-story-plus-attic commercial building was part of the skyscraper building boom that occurred in East Midtown following the construction of Grand Central Terminal. Its unconventional footprint (a narrow lot less than 45 feet deep) allowed an efficient floor plan with a “veneer” of offices, essentially all having street frontages and first-class rents. The building’s unique massing profile and impressive appearance attracted considerable media coverage, including the *New York Herald Tribune*’s description of it as “an unusual structure both in appearance and as a real estate renting proposition.”

400 Madison Avenue is one of the most notable prewar skyscrapers in Midtown, with its intricate new-Gothic terra-cotta façade taking a full Madison Avenue blockfront between 47th and 48th Street. The building’s massing, a sheer 14-story rise from the street level with multiple setbacks above, is a classic example of a post-1916 Zoning Resolution skyscraper. Storefronts and the building’s main entrance occupy the ground floor of the façade. All three of the building’s primary façades are treated similarly, with vertical piers and recessed windows that

emphasize the building's height. This neo-Gothic architectural style became popular for skyscrapers soon after 1900, and can also be seen in the New York Times Building, the Trinity and United States Realty Buildings, and the Woolworth Building. Severance believed skyscrapers should contribute to the illumination of their surroundings, so he sheathed the façade in cream-colored terra cotta that reflects sunlight and highlights the abstracted neo-Gothic ornament. The narrow lot and large windows allow maximum daylight to penetrate the office spaces, perpetuating 400 Madison Avenue's ability to rent first-class space.

400 Madison Avenue is situated in a C5-3 zoning district, which allows a maximum base FAR of 10 for residential uses and 15 for commercial and community facility uses, within the Special Midtown District. The building contains 146,191 square feet of floor area on an 8,987 square zoning lot (16.27 FAR).

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 building or one which is across the street and opposite to the zoning 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 ("adjacent lot"). The 400 Madison Avenue Building stands on an 8,987 zoning lot in a C5-3 zoning district. The building, at 16.27 FAR, is built above the maximum allowable 15 FAR, so there is no floor area available for transfer.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers upon application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The landmark is located within the area affected by the proposed East Midtown Subdistrict Text Amendment application (N 170186 ZRM). If approved, the text amendment would allow landmarks within the proposed subdistrict to transfer its unused development rights to any eligible building similarly located within the proposed subdistrict. 400 Madison Avenue does not have any unused development rights.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. Furthermore, 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.

CARL WEISBROD, Chairman

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman

IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ,

JOSEPH DOUEK, RICHARD W. EADDY,

CHERYL COHEN EFFRON, HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,

ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ Commissioners