



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 15, 2010 / Calendar No. 8

N 110139 HKQ

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 4, 2010 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of Ridgewood South Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 26, 2010 (List No. 434, LP No. 2348). The Ridgewood South Historic District consists of the property bounded by a line beginning at the southwest corner of Woodward and Catalpa Avenues, extending south along the western curbline of Catalpa Avenue across Onderdonk Avenue to the southern curbline of Onderdonk Avenue, easterly across Catalpa Avenue and the southern curbline of Onderdonk Avenue to a line extending northerly from the eastern (rear) property line of 57-34 Catalpa Avenue, southerly along said line and the eastern (rear) property lines of 57-34 through 57-14 Catalpa Avenue, westerly along the southern property line of 57-14 Catalpa Avenue to the eastern curbline of Catalpa Avenue, northerly along said eastern curbline of Catalpa Avenue to a line extending easterly across Catalpa Avenue from the southern property line of 57-17 Catalpa Avenue, westerly along said line and the southern property lines of 57-17 Catalpa Avenue and 18-20 Cornelia Street to the western curbline of Cornelia Street, southerly along said western curbline of Cornelia Street to a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 18-11 Cornelia Street, westerly along said line and the southern property line of 18-11 Cornelia Street to the western (rear) property line of 18-11 Cornelia Street, northerly along said western (rear) property line of 18-11 Cornelia Street and the western (rear) property lines of 18-11 through 18-15 Cornelia Street to the southern property line of 18-20 Putnam Avenue, western along said southern property line of 18-20 Putnam Avenue and the southern property lines of 18-19 Putnam Avenue, 18-20 and 18-19 Madison Street, and 18-20 Woodbine Street to the western curbline of Woodbine Street, southerly along said western curbline of Woodbine Street to a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 18-13 Woodbine Street, westerly along said line and the southern property line of 18-13 Woodbine Street, northerly along the western (rear) property line of 18-13 Woodbine Street and the western (rear) property lines 18-15 through 18-29 Woodbine Street to the southern curbline of Onderdonk Avenue, easterly along said southern curbline of Onderdonk Avenue to the eastern curbline of Woodbine Street, northerly across Onderdonk Avenue and along the eastern curbline of Woodbine Street to a line extending westerly from the northern property line of 18-66 Woodbine Street, easterly along said line and the northern property line of 18-66 Woodbine Street to the western (rear) property line of 18-67 Madison Street, northerly along said western (rear) property line of 18-67 Madison Street and the western (rear) property lines of 18-69 through 18-77 Madison Street, northeasterly along the western property lines of 18-79 through 18-85 Madison Street (aka 768 Woodward Avenue) to the southern curbline of Woodward Avenue, and easterly along the southern curbline of Woodward Avenue, to the point or place of beginning in Community District 5, Borough of Queens.

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 26, 2010*, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Ridgewood South Historic District (LP No. 434, Designation List 2348). The proposed historic district encompasses all or part of ten blocks generally bounded by Woodbine Street and Woodward, Catalpa, and Seneca avenues in the Ridgewood area of Queens Community District 5. The Ridgewood South Historic District is significant as a large, intact grouping of fully developed model tenements that reflect the development of Ridgewood neighborhood in the early 20th century. A contiguous district in both typology and style, it is composed of over 210 buildings, primarily three-story brick tenements, and the St. Matthias Roman Catholic Church Complex.

In the 19th century, Ridgewood was predominately developed with open farmland and several amusement parks. Denser building activity began with the coming of the electric trolley in 1894, and after 1898, Ridgewood was subjected to the eastward expansion of a growing New York City. Located adjacent to Brooklyn's Eastern District (which contained the communities of Bushwick, Williamsburg and Greenpoint), Ridgewood became an ideal location for upwardly mobile German-Americans to relocate, away from the over-crowding and more recent immigrants inhabiting Bushwick and Williamsburg, as well as Manhattan's Lower East Side.

The tenements which comprise the proposed landmark district were constructed between 1911 and 1912 by the G.X. Mathews Company and were designed by architect Louis Allmendinger. Known as "Mathews Model Flats," these "new law" tenements had larger rooms and more

adequate sanitary facilities than their 19th-century predecessors. Built in long rows of repeated designs that create a sense of place, the facades retain a high degree of integrity and are distinguished by their buff and amber-colored brick facades, cast-stone details, ornate pressed metal cornices, and stoop and areaway ironwork.

German-immigrant Gustave X. Mathews began building in Ridgewood in the first decade of the 20th century. Using wider lots, large air shafts, private bathrooms, and limiting occupancy to two families per floor, Mathews' "cold-water" flats were a radical improvement to the overcrowded tenements of Williamsburg and the Lower East Side. By creating improved living quarters and controlling costs so that the apartments could be affordable to families of modest income, Mathews found a niche in the real estate market and met with immediate success. He built and sold over 300 tenements in Ridgewood between 1909 and 1912, receiving 25% of the tenement house permits issued in Queens in 1911. As testament to their improved design, the "Mathews Model Flats" were exhibited by the New York City Tenement House Department at the Panama-Pacific Fair in San Francisco in 1915.

The buildings in this district are fully developed Mathews Flats buildings, which became standards for later tenement house construction, and are characteristic of the development of the area in the first quarter of the 20th century. In addition to being innovative in plan, the tenements are striking in appearance. Built after 1905 when fire codes in Ridgewood began requiring masonry construction for attached row housing, the buildings have load-bearing masonry walls constructed of light colored Kreisler brick. Using mainly buff and amber-colored brick, the buildings have fine detailing in the Romanesque- and Renaissance-Revival styles, including

corbelled, projecting, contrasting and geometric patterned brickwork, brick pilasters, and contrasting brick bases and cast-stone string coursing. Most of the tenements employ the same design with Romanesque Revival-style round and segmental arches of contrasting brick, and carved-stone door lintels. With mainly flat facades, the mid-block buildings are recessed from the street wall of the corner buildings, adding further interest to the row. Other handsome details include Classically-inspired carved-stone entablatures, pressed metal cornices and original ironwork at the stoop and areaway. The buildings facing Woodward and Onderdonk Avenues have commercial storefronts at the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors, while those on the side streets are completely residential.

The St. Matthias Roman Catholic Church complex, which includes a cathedral, rectory, school and convent, faces Catalpa Avenue at the eastern edge of the district. Constructed of pale yellow or amber brick, these four buildings are architecturally congruous with the rest of the district and are significant in the telling of Ridgewood's history and development. The first building, designed by the prominent architect F.J. Berlenbach as a combined church and school, was erected on the property in 1909 and is currently used as the school. As the congregation grew with the population of the surrounding area, the grand cathedral—which was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style—was completed in 1926. The buildings in the district are mostly intact, however some alterations include new stoops, replacement windows and doors, removed ironwork, new awnings and altered storefronts. A cohesive collection of speculative urban architecture, the tenements in the Ridgewood South Historic District retain extremely high levels of architecture.

The historic district is located within the boundaries of the Ridgewood rezoning (C 000639 ZMQ) that was adopted by the city council in 2000. The bulk of the historic district area is located within an R6B district. Two small portions of the historic district extend into an R5B district to the east and a C4-3A district to the west. R5B zoning districts permit all types residential development with a maximum FAR of 1.35 and community facilities with a maximum FAR of 2.0. The maximum building height in an R5B district is limited to 33 feet. R6B zoning districts permit all types residential development and community facilities with a maximum FAR of 2.0. In R6B districts the base height of a new building before setback must be between 30 and 40 feet; the maximum building height is 50 feet. C4-3A districts allows all residential and community facility uses as well as a variety of commercial uses that serve a wide area. In C4-3A districts residential, community facility, and commercial developments are allowed a maximum FAR of 3.0. Above a base height of 40 to 60 feet, the building must set back before rising to its maximum height of 70 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 1, 2010, (Calendar No. 12). There were no speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution and the economic growth and development of the area. The designation of the Ridgewood South Historic District does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution.

In addition, 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 within the historic district or surrounding area.

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