



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 20, 2019, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters (Block 1426, Lot 10), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 11, 2019 (Designation List No. 512/LP-2605), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 8.

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 June 11, 2019, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters, located at 215 East 71st Street (Block 1426, Lot 10) as a City landmark. The landmark site is located on the north side of East 71st Street between First and Second avenues, within Manhattan Community District 8.

The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York Headquarters was designed in 1929 by the noted architect Richard Henry Dana, Jr. and serves as an exceptional example of the Georgian Revival style.

Incorporated in 1893, the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York was an early member of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, founded in Philadelphia in 1891. The members, all of whom must prove direct descent from a significant figure in the development of the country during the colonial period, have been among the earliest proponents of historic preservation in the country. The New York Society has been responsible for the Van Cortlandt Mansion in the Bronx, a designated New York City Landmark, since 1896. By the 1920s with its membership growing, the New York Society commissioned a new building in 1929 on East 71st Street to serve as their headquarters and a house museum showcasing colonial residential architecture and interior design.

The building's facades reflect architect Richard Henry Dana, Jr.'s knowledge of colonial architecture and display his ability to meld elements from Dutch- and English-influenced colonial-era houses from New York, Massachusetts, Virginia, and Pennsylvania into a cohesive design reminiscent of the country's early history. The red brick, Flemish-bond facade is defined by stone stringcourses, brick quoins, and a modillioned cornice. The steeply-sloped roof features four pedimented dormers and a cast-stone balustrade. The fenestration replicates colonial-era multi-light double-hung sash and is set within keyed, brick surrounds with stone keystones, further enhanced at the first story by paneled shutters. Based largely on the Col. John McEver house (c. 1750) which once stood at 34 Wall Street, Dana adapted the design to the size of the lot paring down five bays to four. This resulted in the asymmetrical placement of the entrance with its rusticated stone surround topped by a broken scroll pediment with the New York Society's shield.

The rear facade faces a walled garden and features two entrances with stoops, multi-light doors, and paneled shutters that connect the garden with the formal dining room. The second story includes a central Palladian window with a double-hung sash, which was reportedly based on that at Mount Pleasant in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. The adjoining balcony is based on that of the Old State House in Boston.

The overall design of the front facade was originally to be a reproduction of the Col. John McEver house (c.1750) that once stood at 34 Wall Street. However, to fit within a 40-foot-wide lot, Dana modified the design creating an atypical four- bay-wide building with asymmetrical placement of the main entrance and replacing some details of the historic design. The Flemish-bond brick facade of the Headquarters features quoins and keyed window surrounds with stone keystones, contrasting limestone stringcourses, and a modillioned cornice. The steeply-pitched slate roof is punctuated by four pedimented dormers and is capped by a balustrade and two large chimneys. The bold rusticated stone entrance surround topped by a broken scroll pediment and Society shield borders a Dutch door and fanlight. The rear facade is similar to the front facade and features a Palladian window that opens out onto a balcony at the second story.

The landmark site is located within a R8B zoning district. R8B districts allow residential and community facility uses up to 4.0 floor area ratio (FAR). With a maximum allowable residential floor area ratio of 4.0 FAR, the 4,222-square-foot lot could be developed with approximately 16,888 square feet of floor area. The existing building on the lot contains 12,644 square feet (2.99 FAR), resulting in 4,244 square feet of unused development rights available for transfer to eligible receiving sites under the existing zoning.

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 that 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. There are three potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area. Under the existing zoning, two of the three potential receiving sites are eligible to receive a transfer of unused development rights from the subject landmark.

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 subject landmark 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 on any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

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DAVID J. BURNEY, ALLEN P. CAPPELLI, Esq.,
ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, MICHELLE R. DE LA UZ,
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