



City Planning Commission

March 26, 2008/Calender No.13

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated February 15, 2008 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Congregation Tifereth Israel, 109-18 54th Avenue, Corona (Block 2010 Lot 1 in part) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 12, 2008 (List No. 401/LP-2283) Borough of Queens, Community District 4.

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.

The Congregation Tifereth Israel was constructed in 1911 to house a Jewish congregation that had relocated to Queens primarily from other parts of New York City. In 1918, East Queens had 18 synagogues, two of which were located in Corona. Of these two synagogues, only the Congregation Tifereth Israel survives. The synagogue is strikingly reminiscent of synagogues found in the Jewish enclaves of the Lower East Side. The synagogues which had to be shoehorned into narrow tenement lots, were often similar in size, material and proportion to their neighboring tenements and commercial buildings, and typically featured symmetrical tripartite facades with a central entrance and corner towers.

Designed by local architect C.L. Varrone, the synagogue is a two-story wood-frame building that was originally clad with horizontal clapboard siding. Its design is typical of early-twentieth-century American synagogues, combining Gothic and Moorish design with Judaic ornament. It has pointed-arched windows, a tripartite upper-story window with roundel featuring a Star of David in colored glass, and decorative ornament at its gabled parapet.

Throughout the 1970's, 80's and 90's the synagogue continued to be used for worship by a very small contingency of its original congregation and their descendants. In 1999, the Queens Historical Society granted Queensmark status to the synagogue in recognition of its historical

and architectural merit and in 2002 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The landmark site is split between an R5 and R6B zoning districts. R5 zoning districts have a maximum FAR of 1.25; R6B zoning districts have a maximum FAR of 2.0. Transfer of floor area is not permitted in R5 districts but would be permitted pursuant to section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution for that portion of the landmark site within the R6B district. The R6B portion of the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 3,125 square feet of floor area. The portion of Congregation Tifereth Israel located in the R6B zoning district contains approximately 768 square feet of floor area, leaving 2,357 square feet available for transfer. There is one potential receiving site available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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 building.

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.

There are no projected public improvements or plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

The subject landmark designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

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