



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 11, Calendar No. 18

N 070369 HKQ

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated March 6, 2007, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Sohmer & Co. Piano Factory Building by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 27, 2007, (List No. 386, LP 2172), located at 31-01 Vernon Boulevard, Borough of Queens, Community District 1.

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 Sohmer & Company Piano Factory Building, with its distinguished mansard-roofed clock tower, was built in 1886 along the East River and housed the Sohmer piano company for nearly 100 years. The subject property is located at 31-01 Vernon Boulevard (Block 508, Lot 5). The L-shaped building was designed in the German Romanesque Revival style by the architectural firm Berger & Baylies, which is responsible for many warehouses and store and loft buildings in the Tribeca section of Manhattan. Its window patterns and monumental red brick facades conveyed a solid image, and the building itself served as an advertisement for the company. Altered only slightly since 1913, the Sohmer Piano Factory Building remains remarkably intact. Sohmer was part of the booming 19th century piano manufacturing industry and is a vivid reminder of the area's industrial past.

Sohmer made pianos at the site until 1982, when the company was bought by Pratt, Reade & Co., a piano keyboard manufacturer that relocated the business to Ivoryton

Connecticut. The Adirondack Chair Company, a furniture manufacturer, subsequently acquired the factory building. It is currently owned by TTW Realty, LLC, which plans to convert the building to residential use.

The landmark site is located in an R6 district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.40, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 104,448 square feet of floor area. The Sohmer Piano Factory Building contains approximately 100,096 square feet of floor area.

Therefore, there are approximately 4,352 square feet theoretically available for transfer.

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 a landmark, or one which is across the street and opposite to the 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.

There are approximately seven potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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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