



July 14, 2021 / Calendar No. 27

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 27, 2021, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Educational Building, 70 Fifth Avenue (Block 576, Lot 36), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 18, 2021 (Designation List No. 253/LP-2650), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 2.

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 May 18, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Educational Building/70 Fifth Avenue as a City landmark. The landmark designation comprises Block 576, Lot 36. The landmark site is located on the southwest corner of West 13th Street and Fifth Avenue in Greenwich Village, Manhattan Community District 2.

Commissioned by book publisher and philanthropist George A. Plimpton and built in 1912-14, the Educational Building stands on the southwest corner of West 13th Street in the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan. Charles Alonzo Rich, formerly of Lamb & Rich, designed the 12-story, 120-foot-tall, office-and-loft building, which housed the national office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as a remarkable group of progressive organizations that shaped American society, including some that remain active.

70 Fifth Avenue was originally known as the Educational Building. Plimpton's firm, Ginn and Company, a publisher of mainly of school and college textbooks, was located on the lower floors. The NAACP was a tenant from 1914 to 1923. This was an especially important period in the organization's development, when it first used legal and educational means to fight injustice and racial prejudice. These accomplishments raised the NAACP's profile, resulting in the establishment of numerous local branches throughout the United States.

A handsome example of the Beaux-Arts style, the primary facades are mostly clad with white brick and have a classical tripartite configuration. Much of the ornament is well preserved, including the masonry door surrounds, composite capitals, cast stone window surrounds, and an extensive terra-cotta cornice. In reference to the building's name and original owner, the door surrounds display cartouches with open books and the uppermost floors have metal grilles with gilded book reliefs.

The New School for Social Research acquired 70 Fifth Avenue in 1972. A significant institution with strong ties to Greenwich Village, it was founded in 1919 as a center for adult education and now incorporates five colleges. The building was renovated in 2005-06 and is now part of the Shelia C. Johnson Design Center at the Parsons School of Design/The New School. The award-winning renovation by Rice+Lipka Architects modified the show windows on the first floor and enlarged the West 13th Street entrance. Except for these alterations, there have been few changes to the exterior.

The Educational Building, 70 Fifth Avenue, is historically significant as the former home of the national office of the NAACP, as well as many impactful organizations that worked for social justice and equality – a legacy carried on by The New School for nearly 50 years.

The building stands on the southwest corner of West 13th Street in the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan. It occupies an L-shaped lot, measuring 26 feet on Fifth Avenue and 165 feet on West 13th Street. The southwest section has an irregular footprint, measuring approximately 108 feet (north-south) by 75 feet (east-west). The surrounding area is mixed use with surrounding land uses comprising one and two and multi-family residential buildings, mixed residential and commercial buildings, commercial office buildings, and a large concentration of community facility/institutional uses, many of which are educational buildings owned by The New School and New York University.

Approximately 25 percent of the site is located in a C6-4 zoning and 75 percent is located in a C6-

2 zoning district. C6-4 districts allow a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 10.0 for residential uses (12.0 with inclusionary housing) and 10.0 for commercial and community facility uses. C6-2 districts allow a maximum FAR of 6.02 for residential uses (7.2 FAR with inclusionary housing) and 6.0 FAR for commercial and community facility uses. C6 districts allow a maximum street wall height of 85 feet/six stories, above which the building's maximum height is governed by a sky exposure plane. The areas to the north and east of the site are mapped with various C6 commercial zoning districts; the areas immediately to the south of the site are mapped with R6 and R10 residential zoning districts.

The lot occupied by the subject landmark has an area of 10,500 square feet and a gross floor area of 116,962 square feet (approximately 10.0 FAR).

Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, in all districts except R1, R2, R3, R4 or R5 districts or C1 or C2 districts mapped within such districts, 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 that fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. The landmark site is overbuilt pursuant to C6-2 and C6-4 zoning regulations and is thus not eligible to transfer unused development rights.

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 Department is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

MARISA LAGO, Chair
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