



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 4, 2007/Calendar No. 5

N 080005HKQ

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated July 6, 2007, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 26, 2007 (List No. 393, LP No.2258). The district boundaries are:

properties bounded by a line beginning at the northeast corner of Skillman Avenue and 43rd Street (Laurel Hill Avenue), extending northerly along the eastern curbline of 43rd Street (Laurel Hill Avenue) to a point on a line extending westerly from the northern lot line of 39-05 43rd Street (Laurel Hill Avenue), easterly along said line and the northern lot lines of 39-24 through 39-16 44th Street (Locust Street) and part of the northern lot line of 39-14 44th Street (Locust Street), northerly along the western lot lines of 39-08 through 39-02 44th Street (Locust Street), to the southern curbline of Barnett Avenue, northeasterly along the southern curbline of Barnett Avenue, easterly across 45th Street (Packard Street) and easterly along the southern curbline of 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue) to the southeast corner of 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue) and 47th Street (Carolin Street), northerly across 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue) to the northeast corner of 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue) and 47th Street (Carolin Street), northerly along the eastern curbline of 47th Street (Carolin Street), easterly along the northern lot lines of 47-01 through 47-19 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), easterly across 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), northerly along the eastern curbline of 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), northeasterly along the southern curbline of Barnett Avenue, easterly across 50th Street (Fitting Street), easterly along the southern curbline of Barnett Avenue, southerly along the western curbline of 52nd Street (Dickson Street) to the southern curbline of 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), easterly along the southern curbline of 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), southwestward along the western curbline of 52nd Street (Dickson Street) to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 51-26 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern lot lines of 51-26 through 51-02 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), to the western curbline of 51st Street (Stone Street), northerly along the western curbline of 51st Street to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 50-22 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern lot lines of 50-22 through 50-02 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue) to the western curbline of 50th Street (Fitting Street), northerly along the western curbline of 50th Street (Fitting Street) to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 39-02 50th Street (Fitting Street) aka 49-20 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern lot lines of 49-26 through 49-12 39th Avenue (Middleburg Avenue), southerly along part of the eastern lot line of 39-09 49th Street (Heiser Street) and the eastern lot lines of 39-11 through 39-33 49th Street (Heiser Street), westerly along the southern lot line of 39-33 49th Street (Heiser Street) to the western curbline of 49th Street (Heiser Street), southerly along the western curbline of 49th Street (Heiser Street) to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 40-17 48th Street (Gosman Avenue) aka 39-70 49th Street, (Heiser Street), westerly along said line and the southern lot lines of 40-17 48th Street (Gosman Avenue) to 40-31 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), to the western curbline of 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), southerly along the western curbline of 48th Street (Gosman Avenue) to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 39-88 48th Street (Gosman

Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern lot lines of 39-88 48th Street (Gosman Avenue) and 39-87 47th Street (Carolin Street), to the western curblineline of 47th Street (Carolin Street), southerly along the western curblineline of 47th Street (Carolin Street) to the southwestern corner of Skillman Avenue and 47th Street (Carolin Street), easterly across 47th Street (Carolin Street) and the southern curblineline of Skillman Avenue, southerly along the western curblineline of 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 43-20 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern lot line of 43-20 48th Street (Gosman Avenue), southerly along part of the eastern lot line of 43-25 47th Street (Carolin Street), and the eastern lot lines of 43-31 through 43-37 47th Street (Carolin Street), westerly along the southern lot line of 43-37 47th Street (Carolin Street), to the western curblineline of 47th Street (Carolin Street), southerly along the western curblineline of 47th Street (Carolin Street), to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern lot line of 43-45 47th Street (Carolin Street), westerly along said line and the southern lot line of 43-45 47th Street (Carolin Street), northerly along the western lot lines of 43-45 through 43-02 47th Street (Carolin Street), to the northern curblineline of Skillman Avenue, westerly along the northern curblineline of Skillman Avenue, to the point of beginning, Borough of Queens, 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 June 26, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) unanimously designated the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District (List 393, LP-2258). Located in Queens Community District 2, the subject historic district is located in northern Sunnyside. The district is generally bounded by 43rd Street on the west, 52nd Street on the east, Barnett Avenue to the north and Queens Boulevard to the south. The entire district consists of 624 buildings covering about 16 blocks.

The LPC's designation report states that, "This large complex is one of the most significant planned residential communities in New York City and has achieved international recognition for its low-rise, low density housing arranged around landscaped open courtyards." Developed between 1924 and 1928 by architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright in conjunction with Alexander Bing's City Housing Corporation (CHC), Sunnyside Gardens is seen as the first practical application of the architecture and planning concepts developed by the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). According to the LPC, "the ideas of the group led to new state and national planning and housing policies and laws that encouraged greater equity in

housing production, location and design.”

At Sunnyside Gardens, among the first American adaptations of British Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept, buildings covered only 28 percent of the land, allowing for six acres of accessible open space, enhanced by the novel placement of underground utilities. Many of the buildings were one-, two-, and three-family townhouses organized around communally managed courts, each with a horticulturally unique design by landscape architect Marjorie Cautley. Aesthetic variety was accentuated by playful rooflines, setbacks and architectural styles, including simplified Colonial Revival, Art Deco or proto-modern styles. Four- to six-story apartment buildings also punctuated the landscape and accommodated expanded types of tenancy. Thus, “The physical arrangement and amenities as well as the community organizational system contributed to the planners’ goal of creating a neighborhood that would meet the social as well as the physical needs of its residents.” The CHC’s process of guaranteeing home mortgages, in a financing climate which made home ownership impossible for most working families, was a precursor of the Federal Housing Act of 1934 and VA insured mortgage programs after World War II.

Sunnyside Gardens was designated a Special Planned Community (PC) Preservation District in 1974. The PC designation protects the unique character of well-planned communities that have been developed as a unit. These communities characteristically have large landscaped open spaces and a superior relationship of buildings, open spaces and commercial uses, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The underlying zoning district consists of R4 (with a maximum FAR of .9), R7 (with a maximum FAR of 3.44), C4-2 (with a maximum commercial FAR of 3.4 and a residential FAR of 2.43) and M1-1 (with a maximum FAR of 1).

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 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 August 8, 2007 (Calendar No. 43) that was continued to August 22, 2007 (Calendar No. 23).

On August 8, 2007 there were seven speakers in favor of the application and two opposed. In addition to the five homeowners or residents in favor, the Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council and a representative for the Councilmember for the 26th district, voiced their support and offered suggestions for improving the coordination between new landmark regulation and zoning. The two homeowners opposed expressed their concerns that the landmark designation would be a burden to residents. On August 22, 2007, there was one homeowner that testified in opposition to the application.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution and the economic growth and development in the area.

The Commission notes that a proposed zoning text amendment (N 080052ZRQ) which is consistent with and recognizes the Landmark Preservation Commission's designation of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District is currently undergoing public review.

The Commission believes that the Historic District is consistent with plans for the area's future development and approval.

The proposed historic district does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal within the historic district or surrounding area.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP Chair

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman

ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E., ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,

ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, RICHARD W. EADDY,

NATHAN LEVENTHAL, JOHN MEROLO, DOLLY WILLIAMS, Commissioners

KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioner, abstained