



## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

---

December 15, 2010/Calendar No. 6

N 110137 HKQ

---

**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated November 4, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of The Queens General Court House located at 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard (Block 9691, Lot 1) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 26, 2010 (List No. 434 LP No. 2404), Borough of Queens, Community District 12.

---

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 October 26, 2010, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated The Queens General Court House located at 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard (Block 9691, Lot 1) as a city landmark.

The Queens General Court House occupies an entire block bounded by Sutphin Boulevard, 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 148<sup>th</sup> Street, and 89<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It is in Downtown Jamaica within the Special Downtown Jamaica District. The building was designed by Alfred Eccles and William Knowles in the Modern Classical style and built between 1937 and 1939. It was initially designed to consolidate the Queens County Clerk, the City Court, the state Supreme Court, and the Surrogate Court under one roof, but currently the tenth judicial district of the state Supreme Court, which includes Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties, occupies the entire building.

The Modern Classical style was selected for this building because it was thought to express the dignity and majesty of the law. The E-shaped seven-story building is faced with Alabama limestone and is articulated with neo-Classical ornament. Following a long-standing tradition for courthouses, its most prominent feature is a two-and-one-half-story colonnaded portico fronted by a grand staircase. At the center of the portico the three arched entrances retain their original bronze coffered doors and are edged with bronze sculptural panels depicting famous lawgivers. Other notable features include the heavy bracketed cornices, balustraded balconies, stylized swagged relief panels, and shallow window surrounds.

The landmark site is located in a C4-4A zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 384,044 square feet of floor area. The Queens General Court House contains approximately 400,000 square feet of 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. Because the Queens General Court House is built with more FAR than is allowable today, there are no unused development rights available for transfer.

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.

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

**AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair**  
**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman**  
**ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, RAYANN BESSER, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,**  
**ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO,**  
**RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,**  
**KAREN A. PHILLIPS, Commissioners**