



## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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September 5, 2007/Calendar No. 13

N 080030 HKM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated July 31, 2007 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Thomas Jefferson Play Center, First Avenue between East 111<sup>th</sup> and East 114<sup>th</sup> streets (Block 1705, p/o Lot 1), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on July 24, 2007 (List No. 394/LP-2236), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11.

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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 July 24, 2007, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Thomas Jefferson Play Center, as a city landmark. The landmark designation includes the bath house, diving and swimming pool, perimeter terracing and fencing, and the paved allees paralleling the northern and southern boundaries of the pool complex perimeter.

The Thomas Jefferson Play Center lies within Thomas Jefferson Park, a 15.5-acre park bounded by East 111<sup>th</sup> and East 114<sup>th</sup> streets, First Avenue and the FDR Drive. Designed by a team of architects, engineers and landscape architects headed by Aymar Embury II and Gilmore D. Clarke, the center was built during the 1935-1936 period.

The Thomas Jefferson Pool, which anchors the Thomas Jefferson Play Center, was one of eleven immense pools opened in the 1930's that used funds provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The Thomas Jefferson Pool and surrounding park were built by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, as part of a comprehensive government-sponsored effort to provide modern recreation facilities in East Harlem. In the 1990's, in response to safety concerns, the diving pool was transformed into a wading pool. The play center also has a U-shaped bath house and elevated terrace that embrace the pool on three sides. It also has broad paths (i.e., allees) that extend along the northern and southern perimeters

of the pool complex. All features have prominent decorative elements.

The surrounding neighborhood is typified by low and mid-rise row houses, high-rise residential buildings and community facility uses. Commercial and ground floor retail uses can be found along portions of East 116<sup>th</sup> Street, Pleasant, First and Second avenues. The area is well-served by several bus lines that run on neighboring avenues and along East 116<sup>th</sup> Street.

The designated landmark building is located within designated parkland. Therefore, Sections 74-79 and 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution are not applicable.

The Commission notes that since the landmark is city-owned, the Landmarks Preservation Commission would issue an advisory report rather than a permit for any proposed alteration to the play center.

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

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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