



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 30, 2011/Calendar No. 14

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IN THE MATTER IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated February 10, 2011, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the designation of the Rev. Isaac and Rebecca Gray Coleman House at 1482 Woodrow Road (Block 7020, Lot 123), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 1, 2011 (Designation List 438/LP-2414).

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the New York 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 February 1, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Reverend Isaac & Rebecca Gray Coleman House located at 1482 Woodrow Road (Block 7020, Lot 123), as a city landmark.

The Rev. Isaac & Rebecca Gray Coleman House is located in the Woodrow/Rossville section of Staten Island, an area also historically known as Sandy Ground, due to the sandy soil in the area. Sandy Ground was established prior to 1779 and became a settlement for both previous slaves of local residents and free African-Americans in the early 1800s. Several African-American families from Snow Hill, Maryland, who earned their living in the oyster trade, relocated to Sandy Ground in the 1840s and 1850s because of Maryland laws that precluded them from owning and operating their own fishing boats. Staten Island had a booming and successful oyster industry throughout the 17th, 18th and early 19th Centuries.

Ephraim Bishop and his wife Ann were believed to be the first residents of the house. Bishop was an African-American oysterman who moved to Staten Island from Maryland. After Bishop died, his wife sold the property to Rev. Isaac Coleman and his wife, Rebecca Gray. Rev. Isaac

Coleman served as pastor of the Rossville AME Zion Church from 1864 to 1865.

The Rev. Isaac & Rebecca Gray Coleman House is believed to have been built in the 1770s, but the earliest confirmation of its existence is from an 1859 survey of the area. The architect of the house is unknown. A section of the original rubble stone foundation and the original fenestration pattern still exist from the original house. However, the house was added to in the 1870s and 1880s, therefore the Coleman House represents a blend of both very late 19th Century Greek Revival style and 18th Century wooden Dutch American farmhouse style. The house has the external H-bent construction form and a double-door storm hatch in the rear of the eastern section common for the Dutch-American style. The late vernacular Greek Revival style is characterized by the clean lines and simple massing of the house, as well as its regularly-spaced bays and symmetrical chimneys. Although there are a few additions to the original house, the Coleman House is an excellent and rare example of one of the oldest buildings from the original Sandy Ground Community still in existence.

The landmark site is located in an R3X zoning district. Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, transfer of development rights is not permitted for landmark sites located in R3X zoning districts. 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 building.

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