



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 11, 2010 / Calendar No. 8

N 100475 HKX

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 30, 2010, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Haffen Building, 2804-2808 Third Avenue (aka 507 Willis Avenue) (Block 2307, Lot 59), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 22, 2010 (Designation List No. 430/LP No. 2388) Borough of the Bronx, Community District 1.

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 22, 2010 the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Haffen Building, in the Bronx, as a city landmark. The landmark designation consists of Block 2307, Lot 59.

The Haffen Building is located in the Melrose section of the Bronx on the easterly side of Third Avenue, between 147th and 148th streets, and extends through to Willis. The building is a seven-story Beaux-Arts style office building designed by architect Michael J. Garvin and constructed from 1901-1902 on a commission by Mathias Haffen.

The Haffen Building is a remarkably intact example of the Beaux-Arts style aesthetic. The Beaux-Arts characteristics of the building include: exuberant, carved ornament depicting festoons of fruit, flowers and ribbons; laurel wreaths and sheaves of wheat (the latter might be an allusion to the Haffen brewery business); the oversized metopes; inverted console brackets; and modillions. The main façade on Third Avenue is larger and slightly more elaborate than the Willis Avenue façade. The Third Avenue facade of the building has a tripartite design, with a two story base, a five story shaft, and a two story capital. The upper floors are vertically divided by monumental four-story pilasters and several projecting cornices that divide the building into three horizontal segments.

The Willis Avenue façade displays basically the same composition and detailing as the Third Avenue façade, but has a more modest base with simple square-headed openings flanked by elegant Ionic pilasters. It is also topped by a deeply projecting copper cornice that runs the width of the building. It is supported by paired brackets at both ends, accentuated by modillions and ornamental foliate details. At the center of the cornice the words “HAFFEN BUILDING” are prominently displayed in raised copper lettering.

The Haffen Building has housed several banking institutions from the early 1900s until the 1950s; two of the most notable were the Knickerbocker Trust and the Dollar Savings Bank. The building has also been occupied by several governmental agencies: the new Tenement House Department leased the second and third floors from September of 1902 until 1930s. It has also been home to the National Puerto Rican Day Parade, Inc.

The landmark site is located in a C4-4 zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.4 the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 8,041 square feet of floor area. The Haffen Building contains approximately 18,041 square feet of floor area. Since the landmark site is built at or above the allowable floor area ratio, there are no development rights which may be available for transfer pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution.

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.

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

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.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, FAICP, Chair

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