



Date:	4/12/2016
LPC Docket #:	17-8243
LPC Action:	Approved
Action required by other agencies:	
Permit Type:	CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Address: 839 St. Marks Avenue

Borough: Brooklyn

Block: 1222 **Lot:** 1

Historic District: Crown Heights North Historic District

Description: A High Victorian Gothic style freestanding mansion designed by Russell Sturgis and built in 1870.

Application is to alter the facades, demolish an addition, and construct a new building on the lot.

COMMISSION FINDINGS

The Commission NOTED that the style, scale, materials and details of the building are among the features that contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the Crown Heights North Historic District. The Commission further noted that the front porch was removed between 1929 and 1940; and that a three-story addition was built in the 1930s when the property transferred from single family use to institutional use.

Pursuant to Section 25-307 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Commission APPROVED the proposal, finding:

- that the existing 1930's addition does not relate to the historic mansion in terms of style, scale, or materials and is not given an architectural style in the designation report, therefore its demolition will not detract from the special historic and architectural character of the mansion or the Crown Heights North Historic District;
- that the demolition of the existing addition will allow for the restoration of the historic facades of the mansion, returning the mansion to a more freestanding building;
- that the mansion has had substantial additions present at the site for longer than the mansion was freestanding, therefore the proposed building is in keeping with this context;
- that, due to the setbacks on Brooklyn Avenue and St. Marks Avenue, the proposed building height blends into the streetscape and does not overwhelm the neighboring rowhouses;
- that setting back the new building from the streetwall on both sides of the site allows the mansion to appear "in the round," and maintains the prominence of the historic mansion at the corner;
- that the scale and massing of the building, which is lower on St. Mark's Avenue and taller on Brooklyn Avenue, is deferential to and does not overwhelm the historic mansion and is consistent with large apartment buildings on the west side of the district;
- that the deep setback location of the proposed building along St. Marks Avenue will preserve the presence of the historic garden context of the house, the lot and the historic greenspace;
- that there is a variety of building types, including rowhouses, institutional buildings, and large apartment buildings in the surrounding blocks, therefore the new building will not detract from the streetscape;
- that the new building will connect with the historic mansion at the first floor only by means of a glass enclosure, exposing the stone facades and minimizing the physical impact of the new building;
- that horizontal decorative brick banding and vertical reveals of the facades articulate the mass of the building into rowhouse proportions, which complements the immediate context;
- that the horizontal brick banding aligns with the eave lines of the mansion, and therefore relates to the proportions of the mansion;
- that the vertical recesses and projecting windows provide subtle depth and articulation that recall the sculptural character of the rowhouses on the block and within the district, and maintain a solid to void ratio consistent with masonry rowhouses and apartment buildings within the district, while contributing to the building's contemporary design;
- that the secondary facades will be in keeping with rear and side facades throughout the district in terms of simple detailing and the ratio of solid to void;
- that the primary use of red brick will relate to traditional building materials found in this district and in the streetscape, and that the supporting materials, including grey metal windows, spandrels, grey brick, and light grey, standing seam paneling at the roof are subdued and complement the materials palette of the mansion;
- that the secondary elevations of the building will be clad in a light-colored brick to minimize visibility as the backdrop to the mansion as viewed from St. Marks Avenue;



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- that the historic hard-scape features in the St. Marks Avenue garden and the perimeter wall and fence will be retained, recalling the historic garden and site conditions;
- that the proposed entrance utilizes the historic approach and existing garden paths, which allows the historic perimeter wall to remain intact and uninterrupted and reinforces the retention of the garden context;
- that the proposal will allow for the elimination of the barrier-free access lifts, which detract from the special architectural and historic character of the mansion;
- and that the proposed work is supportive of the ongoing institutional and adaptive reuse of the mansion.

VOTE:

Present: Meenakshi Srinivasan, Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, John Gustafsson, Kim Vauss

8-0-0

In Favor = M.Srinivasan, F.Bland, D.Chapin, W.Chen, M.Devonshire, M.Goldblum, J.Gustafsson, K.Vauss

Oppose =

Abstain =

Recuse =

Please note that these "Commission Findings" are a summary of the findings related to the application. This is NOT a permit or approval to commence any work. No work may occur until the Commission has issued a Certificate of Appropriateness, which requires review and approval of Department of Buildings filing drawings and/or other construction drawings related to the approved work. In addition, no work may occur until the work has been reviewed and approved by other City agencies, such as the Department of Buildings, as required by law