



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

November 14, 2012 / Calendar No. 9

N 130075 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated September 19, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings, 315-317 Grand Street (Block 308, Lots 14 and 15), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on September 11, 2012 (Designation List No. 459/LP-2397), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 2.

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 September 11, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings, located at 315-317 Grand Street (Block 308, Lots 14 and 15), as a city landmark. The landmark site at 315-317 Grand Street is located on the south side of the Grand Street blockfront between Allen and Ludlow streets, in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan.

The company was founded circa 1848 by Edward Ridley. Through the latter half of the 19th century, Edward Ridley & Sons thrived and expanded in the Lower East Side to become the neighborhood's largest department store. Over the years, the business grew by expanding into buildings along Grand and Allen streets, none of which survive. The buildings at 315-317 Grand Street were commissioned by Ridley's sons in 1886. The five-story, Classical Revival-style structures were designed by architect Paul F. Schoen and reflected the company's most ambitious expansion. By 1889, the store employed about 2,500 people, many of whom were women, area residents or recent immigrants.

On the Orchard Street facade Schoen used primarily brick and stone, while the more prominent Grand Street facade was executed in cast iron, a material that at the time had been associated with major mercantile buildings and retail stores. A late example of this type of construction, the iron bays incorporate distinctive details as columns, keystones, pilasters and decorative relief panels. Particularly noteworthy is the rounded corner at Grand and Orchard streets. This design

element served as a major entrance and was intended to increase visibility from trolley cars travelling from the Grand Street-Williamsburg ferry. Over the years, as the store failed to meet sales expectations, the area became increasingly less retail-oriented, and in 1901 Ridley & Sons closed. When Allen Street was widened in the early 1930s, the building that was located at the southeast corner of Grand and Allen streets was demolished, making 315-317 Grand Street into a corner building. A new west wall was built with tan brickwork, designed in the prevailing Art Deco style by architect John N. Linn.

The landmark site is located in a C6-2G zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.02, the 6,223-square-foot zoning lot could be developed with approximately 37,462 square feet of floor area. The Edward Ridley & Sons Department Store Buildings contain approximately 30,825 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 6,638 square feet theoretically available for transfer.

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 or one which is across the street and opposite to the 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 building. There are six potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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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