



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

August 21, 2013 / Calendar No. 23

N 140010 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated July 8, 2013, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, 8 Columbus Avenue (Block 1131, Lot 31), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 25, 2013 (Designation List No. 465/LP-2260), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 7. The landmark designation was modified by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on July 23, 2013 (Designation List No. 465A/LP-2260-A) to reduce the area of designation to a portion of Block 1131, Lot 31.

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 25, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Church of St. Paul the Apostle (List 465, LP-2260) at 8 Columbus Avenue as a landmark. The landmark designation was modified by the LPC on July 23, 2013 (List 465A, LP-2260-A) to remove a former convent building from the area of designation and include only the land beneath the church and West 60th Street areaway in the landmark designation.

The landmark site at 8 Columbus Avenue is located at the southwest corner of Columbus Avenue and 60th Street (Block 1131, part of Lot 31) in Manhattan Community District 7. The church was designed by the architect Jeremiah O'Rourke in a Medieval Revival style for the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle and constructed between 1875 and 1885.

The austere and imposing Medieval Revival style design is loosely based on Gothic and Romanesque sources. The Paulist Fathers trace their origins to 1858 when Isaac Hecker traveled to Rome and received permission from Pope Pius IX to organize an American society of missionary priests. The following year, Archbishop John Hughes of New York asked Hecker's group to establish a parish on Manhattan's Upper West Side and a simple brick church was constructed. The new parish quickly outgrew this building and in the mid-1870s a new structure

was planned by Jeremiah O'Rourke, a New Jersey architect with various Catholic churches to his credit. George Deshon, a Paulist priest who trained at West Point as a military engineer, took over the project by the early 1880s and probably simplified O'Rourke's original design. The rock-faced grey granite stonework was salvaged from various structures in Manhattan, including sections of an embankment of the Croton Aqueduct that was originally on the Upper West side and the Croton Distributing Reservoir at 42nd Street, as well as Booth's Theater, which stood at Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street until 1883. When the church was dedicated in January 1885, however, it was far from complete. The towers had yet to attain their current height and few major decorative features had been installed, including the jamb statues that flank the entrances and the stained glass windows. The American muralist Lumen Martin Winter designed the impressive marble and mosaic bas-relief in the broad recess between the towers. Commissioned to celebrate the parish centenary in 1959, this colorful artwork depicts the "Conversion of Paul" on the road to Damascus. During the 1960s and 1970s, the parish struggled financially. With bankruptcy looming in 1973, a proposal to demolish the church and replace it with an apartment building was considered. In the mid-1980s, however, only the west portion of the site was sold, as well as various development rights in 1984 and 1998. At this time, a major restoration of the Church of St. Paul the Apostle was begun and has been ongoing.

The building is situated in a C4-7 zoning district, which permits 10.0 FAR for residential, commercial and community facility uses. The building is included in a larger zoning lot and is subject to a zoning lot agreement which allocates 13,250 SF of floor area above what is built to the landmark site.

The building is located in a mixed use area that transitions between commercial midtown to the east and the largely residential neighborhoods of Clinton to the south and the Upper West Side to the north. St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital is located on the block to the south and the Fordham University campus is to the immediate north. Central Park is also one block to the east. There are three nearby special zoning districts: Special Lincoln Square District to the north, the Special Midtown District to the east and the Special Clinton District to the south.

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 building or one which is across the street and opposite to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building, or in the case of a corner lot, one which fronts the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. The Church of St. Paul the Apostle occupies a roughly 40,000-SF portion of an approximately 86,000-SF zoning lot that was merged with adjacent lots in 1984 and 1998. The most recent zoning lot agreement reflects 13,250 SF of floor area allocated to the portion of the zoning lot occupied by the building in addition to the building's built floor area. For the purposes of considering transferrable floor area, the 13,250 SF of floor area allocated in the zoning lot agreement is eligible for transfer. There are nine eligible receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

Pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution, landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers upon application to the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The Department is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation 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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