



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 18, 2013/Calendar No. 10

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 7, 2013, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the 39 Worth Street Building (Block 176, Lot 11), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 29, 2013 (Designation List No. 469 / LP-2539).

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 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 October 29, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the 39 Worth Street Building as a City landmark. The landmark site at 39 Worth Street is located on the north side of Worth Street between West Broadway and Church Street, in the Tribeca neighborhood of Lower Manhattan.

By 1825, following completion of the Erie Canal, New York City began to grow into the country's premier port and trading center, with new piers being constructed along the Hudson River to accommodate larger ships. In the 1850s the area west of Broadway began its transformation into the City's new dry goods district, and had reached Worth Street by the 1860s.

The 39 Worth Street Building, a five-story, three-bay wide store-and-loft building with a cast-stone and cast-iron façade, is a fine example of the growing influence of the French Second Empire style of architecture that began after the Civil War. The Venetian Italianate style of architecture had a cage-like grid of recessed spandrels and protruding pilasters which terminated in round arches containing bifurcated window frames and an elaborate parapet. This style most notably offered a skeletal arcaded façade – made possible through the incorporation of iron elements – that allowed abundant light into the building interior. Overlapping with the Italianate style was the French Second Empire style based on 16th-century French Renaissance architecture. The commercial version was distinguished by large window openings with segmental or flat arches with rounded corners in lieu of the round arches, a larger proportion of

fenestration to wall surface, and mansard roofs. Many buildings of the late 1860s incorporated elements of both the Italianate and Second Empire style in their designs. The neighboring building, 41 Worth Street, was built one year prior and was designed in the Venetian Italianate style.

The 39 Worth Street building was designed by architect Issac F. Duckworth, who designed many store-and-loft buildings in the Italianate and French Second Empire styles in the 1860s and 1870s in Tribeca East, Tribeca South, and the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic Districts. Daniel D. Badger, who fabricated the cast-iron front of the building, had his first major commission was the fabrication of the cast-iron storefronts of A. T. Stewart's Broadway department store, linking him with the commercial and stylistic changes that helped make New York the center of cast-iron architecture. Badger has been credited with being instrumental in popularizing the use of cast-iron fronts in America.

Throughout the 19th century, the building was leased to numerous companies engaged in the various aspects of the dry goods business including manufacturers of ladies wear and leather goods, jobbers, a rug importer, textile merchants, and mill representatives. Textile companies, joined briefly by a restaurant known as the Weeping Willow Tea Room from 1938 to 1941, continued to occupy 39 Worth Street until the early 1970s. By the mid-1970s residential tenants began to move into vacated loft spaces south of Canal Street, following a trend begun by artists in SoHo. By 1975, the upper stories of 39 Worth Street were being used as living quarters, and converted into cooperative residences in 1981. The building now contains residences with retail uses on the ground floor.

The landmark site is located in a C6-2A zoning district in the Special Tribeca Mixed Use District (Area A1) with a maximum FAR of 5.0. The 2,506 square foot zoning lot could be developed with 12,530 square feet of floor area. 39 Worth Street contains approximately 11,000 square feet of floor area (4.39 FAR). It, therefore, has approximately 1,530 square feet of unused development rights to 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 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 on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. There are three potential receiving sites for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

Pursuant to Section 74-11 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 subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. Furthermore, 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.

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