



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

December 17, 2014, Calendar No. 11

N 150157 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated November 6, 2014, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of First German Baptist Church, 334 East 14th Street (Block 455, Lot 24, in part), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on October 28, 2014, (List No. 475/LP-2475), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 3.

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 28, 2014, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the First German Baptist Church, at 334 East 14th Street (aka 334-336 East 14th Street), as a city landmark. The landmark site at 334 East 14th Street (Block 455, Lot 24, in part) is located on the south side of East 14th Street midblock between 1st and 2nd Avenues in the East Village neighborhood, Manhattan Community District 3.

The First German Baptist Church was designed by Julius Boeckell, a prolific architect who worked almost exclusively for German clients within the German enclaves of New York. The building was constructed in 1866-69 and is an excellent example of the Rundbogenstil (round-arched) style of architecture. The style was developed in Germany between the late 1820s and the 1840s by architect-theorists who were seeking a progressive and authentically German way for architects to build. Hallmarks of the style include round-arched openings, broad smooth expanses of wall surface, and simple ornament – notably arcuated corbel tables, pilaster strips, and bands concentrated at the crowning of the building and around structural elements such as

windows and doors. From Germany, the style spread to the United States in the 1840s and was first used for Protestant churches.

The First German Baptist Church was a vital social and spiritual center for its largely poor and immigrant congregation and an important center and training ground for the German Baptist Church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, by the 1920s the German presence on the Lower East Side had declined.

In 1962 the building was sold to the Congregation Tifereth Israel – Town and Village Synagogue. The synagogue made some changes to the façade of the building, notably the signage, the installation of iron menorahs at the first story, and a Star of David to the center second-story window lighting the sanctuary. The building survives today as a largely-intact and fine example of Rundbogenstil architecture and as a significant reminder of the rich cultural and social history of the Lower East Side.

The landmark site is located in a C1-6A zoning district. With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.0, the 6,195 square foot lot could be developed with approximately 24,780 square feet of floor area. First German Baptist Church contains 11,302 square feet resulting in 13,478 square feet of unused development rights available for transfer under the existing zoning.

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 seven potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area. However, only six of the seven sites are underbuilt, and therefore eligible to receive development rights.

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 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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