



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated March 3, 2017, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, located at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (aka, 1021 Amsterdam Avenue, 1061 Amsterdam Avenue and 419 West 110th Street (Cathedral Parkway) (Block 1865, Lots 1, 10, S8010), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 21, 2017 (Designation List No.495/LP-2585), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 9.

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 February 21, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Cathedral Close, located at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (Block 1865, Lots 1, 10 and S8010), as a City landmark. The landmark designation comprises most of a full city block that is bounded by Amsterdam Avenue, Morningside Drive, Cathedral Parkway (aka, West 110th Street) and West 112th Street, within Manhattan Community District 9.

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Cathedral Close comprise one of the great religious complexes of the world. The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Cathedral Close are located at Amsterdam Avenue and West 112th Street, and are the seat of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. The Cathedral is considered the crowning glory of the Morningside Heights neighborhood, which came to be known as "the Acropolis of the new world" for the many cultural institutions that moved there in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Cathedral and the complex represent many phases of development over a long period of time and remain incomplete. Even in its unfinished state, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine remains one of the largest churches in the United States and the world.

The Cathedral was chartered in 1873 under the leadership of Bishop Horatio Potter. An architectural competition for the Cathedral Church was held in 1888 and won by the architectural firm of Heins & Lafarge. The winning proposal was an eclectic design incorporating elements of the Romanesque, Byzantine, and Gothic styles. The first phase of construction began in 1892 with the laying of the cornerstone and continued to 1911 when the crypt, choir, and crossing were completed. Changes in taste and the death of Heins in 1907 brought about a new French Gothic design for the completion of the Cathedral by architect Ralph Adams Cram of the firm Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson.

A second construction phase began in 1916 and continued until 1941. During this period, the nave was completed and joined to the choir by a rough-finished crossing, the imposing west façade was added, and the north transept was begun. Work resumed in 1979 on the towers of the west front and a proposal for the design of the south transept was adopted. The church's main vault rises to a height of 124 feet; its entire length is 601 feet. Its monumental size was intended to take advantage of its lofty location. Its stained-glass windows feature both biblical and modern characters. The Cathedral remains unfinished.

Along with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine are the auxiliary buildings of the Cathedral Close, which constitute one of the outstanding ecclesiastical ensembles in the city. Partially extant from the era prior to the 1887 sale of this site for the Cathedral is the Leake & Watts Orphan Asylum (1838-42, Ithiel Town, architect; Samuel Thomson, builder), the oldest building in Morningside Heights and one of the most significant examples of a Greek Revival style institutional building of the 1830s with Ionic columns surviving in New York City (it has served a variety of Cathedral functions over the years). The Collegiate Gothic style St. Faith's House (1909-11, C. Grant Lafarge) was built as the home of the New York Training School for Deaconesses, an independent Episcopal institution, founded in 1890, that was granted a location on the Cathedral grounds by Cathedral trustees. The Collegiate Gothic style Choir School (1912-13, [Walter] Cook & [Winthrop A.] Welch) housed the school that was founded in 1901 in order to educate boys who would sing in the Cathedral choir. Ralph

Adams Cram, of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, designed the remaining three of the Cathedral's auxiliary buildings: the neo-Gothic style Synod House (1912-14), built for the specific purpose of New York hosting the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1913, and the more domestically-scaled French Chateausque style Deanery (1913), and Bishop's House (1912-14).

The buildings that form the Cathedral Close, also designed by prominent New York architects, represent significant examples of their style and type. Together, the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and the Cathedral Close form one of New York City's most important religious complexes.

The landmark site is located within an R7-2 zoning district. With a maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.5, the 454,578-square-foot zoning lot could be developed with approximately 2,954,757 square feet of floor area. The existing floor area on the subject zoning lot contains 372,493 square feet (.82 FAR), resulting in 2,582,264 square feet of unused development rights available for transfer to eligible receiving sites 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 that is across the street and opposite to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark building, or in the case of a corner lot, one that fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. There are nine potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area, as all eligible lots comprising the potential receiving sites are currently underbuilt.

Requirements for transfer of development rights

The Commission notes that the subject landmark generates a significant amount of unused development rights available for transfer and had concerns about the distribution of these unused development rights on surrounding buildings. Department of City Planning staff note that no transfer can occur without Commission oversight.

Pursuant to Section 74-791 of the Zoning Resolution, an application to the City Planning

Commission for a grant of a special permit to allow a transfer of development rights and construction based thereon shall be made by the owners of the respective zoning lots and shall include: a site plan of the landmark lot and the adjacent lot, including plans for all developments or enlargements on the adjacent lot; a program for the continuing maintenance of the landmark; and such other information as may be required by the City Planning Commission. The application shall be accompanied by a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission. A separate application shall be filed for each independent "adjacent lot" to which development rights are being transferred under this Section.

Pursuant to Section 74-793 of the Zoning Resolution, the owners of the landmark lot and the adjacent lot shall submit to the City Planning Commission a copy of the transfer instrument legally sufficient in both form and content to effect such a transfer. Notice of the restrictions upon further development or enlargement on the lot occupied by the landmark and the adjacent lot shall be filed by the owners of the respective lots in the place and county designated by law for the filing by the owners of the respective lots in the place and county designated by law for the filing of deeds and restrictions on real property, a certified copy of which shall be submitted to the Commission.

Both the instrument of transfer and the notice of restrictions shall specify the total amount of floor area to be transferred, and shall specify, by lot and block numbers, the lots from which and the lots to which such transfer is made.

Additionally, the Commission shall give due consideration to the relationship between the landmark building and any buildings developed or enlarged on the adjacent lot regarding materials, design, scale and location of bulk, and may prescribe appropriate

conditions and safeguards to minimize adverse effects on the character of the surrounding 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 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 on any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

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