



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 26, 2017 / Calendar No. 20

N 170298 HKM

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated March 3, 2017 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Morningside Heights Historic District designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 21, 2017 (Designation List 495/LP-2584), which consists of the properties bounded by a line beginning on the eastern curblineline of Riverside Drive at a point on a line extending westerly from the southern property line of 362 Riverside Drive (aka 362-366 Riverside Drive; 318 West 109th Street), extending northerly along the eastern curblineline of Riverside Drive to the southern curblineline of West 119th Street, easterly along the southern curblineline of West 119th Street to the western curblineline of Claremont Avenue, southerly along the western curblineline of Claremont Avenue continuing southerly to the southern curblineline of West 116th Street, easterly along the southern curblineline of West 116th Street to the western curblineline of Broadway, southerly along the western curblineline of Broadway to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 600 West 116th Street (aka 2951-2959 Broadway), westerly along said line and the southern property lines of 600 West 116th Street (aka 2951-2959 Broadway), 606 West 116th Street (aka 602-606 West 116th Street), 610 West 116th Street (aka 608-610 West 116th Street), 612 West 116th Street and part of the southern property line of 616 West 116th Street (aka 614-618 West 116th Street), southerly along the eastern property line of 617 West 115th Street and a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 617 West 115th Street to the southern curblineline of West 115th Street, easterly along the southern curblineline of West 115th Street to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 608 West 115th Street (aka 608-610 West 115th Street) southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 608 West 115th Street (aka 608-610 West 115th Street) to a point on the northern property line of 609 West 114th Street (aka 605-609 West 114th Street), easterly along the northern property line of 609 West 114th Street (aka 605-609 West 114th Street) and part of the northern property line of 601 West 114th Street (aka 601-603 West 114th Street; 2921-2927 Broadway), northerly along the western property line of 600 West 115th Street (aka 2931-2939 Broadway) to the southern curblineline of West 115th Street, easterly along the southern curblineline of West 115th Street to the western curblineline of Broadway, southerly along the western curblineline of Broadway to the northern curblineline of West 114th Street, westerly along the northern curblineline of West 114th Street to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 604 West 114th Street, southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 604 West 114th Street, to the southern property line of 604 West 114th Street, westerly along the southern property lines of 604 to 618 West 114th Street, southerly along the eastern property line of 615 West 113th Street (aka 615-617 West 113th Street) and a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 615 West 113th Street (aka 615-617 West 113th Street) to the southern curblineline of West 113th Street, easterly along the southern curblineline of West 113th Street and across Broadway to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 562 West 113th Street (aka 562-568 West 113th Street; 2890-2898 Broadway), southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 562 West 113th Street (aka 562-568 West 113th Street; 2890-2898 Broadway), westerly along part of the southern property line of 562 West 113th Street (aka 562-568 West 113th Street; 2890-2898 Broadway), southerly along the eastern property line of 545 West 112th Street (aka 2880-2888 Broadway) and a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 545 West

112th Street (aka 2880-2888 Broadway) to the southern curbline of West 112th Street, easterly along the southern curbline of West 112th Street to point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 542 West 112th Street (aka 542-548 West 112th Street, 2868-2878A Broadway), southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 542 West 112th Street (aka 542-548 West 112th Street, 2868-2878A Broadway) to a point on the northern property line of 545 West 111th Street (aka 2858-2866 Broadway), easterly along part of the northern property line of 545 West 111th Street (aka 2858-2866 Broadway) and the northern property lines of 535 West 111th Street (aka 533-537 West 111th Street) to 503 West 111th Street (aka 503-505 West 111th Street), southeasterly along the eastern property line of 503 West 111th Street (aka 503-505 West 111th Street) and southerly along a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 503 West 111th Street (aka 503-505 West 111th Street) to the southern curbline of West 111th Street, easterly along the southern curbline of West 111th Street to the western curbline of Amsterdam Avenue, southerly along the western curbline of Amsterdam Avenue continuing in a straight line across Cathedral Parkway to a point on a line extending easterly from the southern property line of 500 Cathedral Parkway (aka 1002A-1018 Amsterdam Avenue), westerly along said line and the southern property lines of 500 Cathedral Parkway (aka 1002A-1018 Amsterdam Avenue) to 550 Cathedral Parkway (aka 548-550 Cathedral Parkway), northerly along the western property line of 550 Cathedral Parkway (aka 548-550 Cathedral Parkway) to the southern curbline of Cathedral Parkway, easterly along the southern curbline of Cathedral Parkway to a point on a line extending southerly from the western property line of 535 Cathedral Parkway (aka 529-541 Cathedral Parkway), northerly along said line and the western property line of 535 Cathedral Parkway (aka 529-541 Cathedral Parkway), to a point on the southern property line of 536 West 111th Street (aka 536-538 West 111th Street), westerly along part of the southern property line of 536 West 111th Street (aka 536-538 West 111th Street), northerly along the western property line of 536 West 111th Street (aka 536-538 West 111th Street) and a line extending northerly from the western property line of 536 West 111th Street (aka 536-538 West 111th Street) to the northern curbline of West 111th Street, westerly along the northern curbline of West 111th Street to the eastern curbline of Broadway, northerly along the eastern curbline of Broadway to the northern curbline of West 112th Street, westerly across Broadway and along the northern curbline of West 112th Street to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 395 Riverside Drive (aka 393-397 Riverside Drive; 620-628 West 112th Street), southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 395 Riverside Drive (aka 393-397 Riverside Drive; 620-628 West 112th Street), easterly along the northern property lines of 611 West 111th Street (aka 609-611 West 111th Street), 605 West 111th Street (aka 605-607 West 111th Street), and 603 West 111th Street, southerly along the eastern property line of 603 West 111th Street and a line extending southerly from the eastern property line of 603 West 111th Street to the southern curbline of West 111th Street, easterly along the southern curbline of West 111th Street to the western curbline of Broadway, southerly along the western curbline of Broadway to the northern curbline of Cathedral Parkway, westerly along the northern curbline of Cathedral Parkway to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 610 Cathedral Parkway (aka 608-614 Cathedral Parkway) southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 610 Cathedral Parkway (aka 608-614 Cathedral Parkway), westerly along the southern property line of 610 Cathedral Parkway (aka 608-614 Cathedral Parkway) and part of the southern property line of 375 Riverside Drive

(aka 371-375 Riverside Drive; 616-624 Cathedral Parkway), southerly along the eastern property line of 370 Riverside Drive (aka 317-327 West 109th Street) to the northern curblineline of West 109th Street, westerly along the northern curblineline of West 109th Street to a point on a line extending northerly from the eastern property line of 362 Riverside Drive (aka 362-366 Riverside Drive; 318 West 109th Street, southerly along said line and the eastern property line of 362 Riverside Drive (aka 362-366 Riverside Drive; 318 West 109th Street), westerly along the southern property line of 362 Riverside Drive (aka 362-366 Riverside Drive; 318 West 109th Street) to the point of the beginning, 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 Morningside Heights Historic District as a City historic district. The landmark designation consists of 115 buildings within an area generally bounded by West 119th Street, West 108th Street, Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue, and Riverside Drive, within Manhattan Community Districts 7 and 9.

The Morningside Heights Historic District consists of approximately 115 residential and institutional buildings representing the district's rapid transformation at the turn of the last century into a densely populated neighborhood. Isolated by its topography, lack of public transportation, and the presence of an orphanage and insane asylum, Morningside Heights remained largely undeveloped through the 19th century. In the 1890s, the Leake and Watts Orphan Asylum and the Bloomingdale Insane Asylum sold their parcels to the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine and Columbia University which, along with the arrival of other institutions, began the transformation of Morningside Heights into the "acropolis" of New York.

New residential development began in 1892-93 when Henry O. Chapman designed the first row houses in Morningside Heights at 633 and 635 West 115th Street for two Columbia law professors. With Morningside Heights still underserved by public transportation, speculative development within the district remained minimal with only scattered row houses and a few early flats buildings, along with a few fraternity houses, constructed through the first years of the 20th century. This changed with the arrival of the IRT along Broadway in 1904, which connected Morningside Heights with midtown and lower Manhattan. Beginning in 1903 with the construction of six small apartment buildings along West 111th Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, speculative developers, many of whom were Italian or Jewish, rapidly filled the plateau with apartment houses marketed to the middle and upper middle classes, giving the Morningside Heights Historic District its character as “probably the most distinctive high-class apartment house quarter in the city.” By 1911, another 69 apartment buildings had been constructed. Smaller buildings joined the district’s existing row houses on the side streets while larger structures filled the main thoroughfares of Cathedral Parkway, Riverside Drive, Claremont Avenue, Broadway, and West 116th Street. Eight more apartment buildings were completed by the end of the 1920s when this rapid period of growth came to an end.

As the district developed, churches and clubs like the Broadway Presbyterian Church (Louis A. Jallade, 1911-12), West Side Unitarian Church (now Congregation Ramath Orah, Hoppin & Koen, 1921-22) and the Explorers Club (now Harmony Hall, Charles E. Birge, 1928-29) were attracted to the neighborhood with its large residential and academic population. The Morningside Heights Historic District is remarkable for its many fine apartment buildings, by some of New York’s premier residential architects of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Designed in a range of revival styles popular in the era, the historic district’s buildings give it a distinct sense of place; they create a distinct character, animating the streetscapes through their materials, ornamentation and facade articulation.

The Historic District is zoned R8, with C1-4 commercial overlays along Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue. R8 is a medium-density non-contextual district that allows residential use up to 6.02 FAR and community facility uses up to 6.5 FAR. Under the Quality Housing option, on wide streets, residential development is allowed up to 7.2 FAR, within a contextual building envelope. C1-4 commercial overlays allow local retail uses up to 2.0 FAR but in mixed residential/commercial buildings, retail uses are limited to the ground floor.

On December 6, 2016, the LPC held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Morningside Heights Historic District. At the public hearing, 33 people spoke in favor of the designation including the City Councilmember who represents the area; representatives of the area's members of the U.S. Congress and New York State Assembly; a representative from the office of the Manhattan Borough President; representatives from Barnard College, the Morningside Heights Historic District Committee, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, Landmark West!, the Historic Districts Council, the Society for the Architecture of the City, the Morningside Heights Community Coalition, the 622 West 114th Street Owners' Corp., and 21 individuals. Five speakers, including representatives of Columbia University, Congregation Ramath Orah, Broadway Presbyterian Church, and the Real Estate Board of New York, opposed the inclusion of selected properties in the district. One resident spoke in opposition to the entire district.

In addition, the LPC received 16 pieces of correspondence: 11 in support of the designation of the district, as proposed, including one from a state Senator, and four opposed the inclusion of specific properties. One letter opposed the district, as proposed. The Commission received four petitions in support of the designation from the neighborhood with a total of 94 signatures.

All landmark buildings within the Historic District are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(a) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 5, 2017 (Calendar No. 25). There were two speakers; a representative from Columbia University, who spoke in opposition to the inclusion of university-owned property located at 608-614 West 114th Street, and a representative from the Borough President's Office, who spoke in support of the proposed historic district designation. There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission has evaluated the Morningside Heights Historic District in relation to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements and plans for the development, growth and improvements in the vicinity of the area involved. The Commission has also reviewed the public hearing testimony of a representative from Columbia University and the letter from the university dated April 13, 2017, opposing the designation of university-owned property located at 608–614 West 114th Street. The testimony and letter stated that the inclusion of the aforementioned properties within the proposed landmark district fails to meet the standards of the Landmark Law and that the designation would unduly limit the University's ability to address current and future needs at its Morningside Heights campus and argues that their private plans for development should be noted in this report. The Commission notes that the University's plans are indefinite and the cited Charter provision relates only to public plans for development. The City Planning Commission expresses no opinion on the application of the Landmarks Law, which is administered by the LPC, and believes that the designation of the Morningside Heights Historic District is consistent with plans for the area's future development and improvement. The Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject Historic District designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the Historic District.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*
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