



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 8, 2018, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Engine Companies 264 & 328/Ladder Company 134, 1615 Central Avenue (p/o Block 15559, Lot 25), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on May 29, 2018 (Designation List No. 507/LP-2609), Borough of Queens, Community District 14.

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 May 29, 2018, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Engine Companies 264 & 328/Ladder Company 134 firehouse as a City landmark. The landmark designation consists of part of Lot 25 on Block 15559, and is located on the east side of Central Avenue, between Mott Avenue and Foam Place, in Far Rockaway, Queens, Community District 14.

The firehouse was designed by the architecture firm Hoppin & Koen and built in 1910-12. It was built during a period of intense municipal building construction in the decades following the consolidation of the five boroughs in 1898. This particular firehouse was a response to increased development on the Rockaway peninsula, spurred by improvements in mass transit that provided better access to the area from the mainland.

According to the LPC report, the three-story firehouse is an excellent example of early-20th century Renaissance Revival style civic architecture. Its standardized design was used at 18 locations citywide. The design was favored for its simplicity and stateliness and could be constructed with one, two, or three bays to adapt to varied urban sites. The Engine Companies 264 & 328/Ladder Company 134 firehouse was one of three with three bays. Its façade features rusticated limestone at the ground floor, segmental-arched vehicle bays, red brick cladding on the upper stories, and pairs of

monumental brick pilasters supporting a cast stone entablature and brick parapet. Locally, the firehouse is affectionately called “The Big House” and it serves as a reminder of the period of growth and promise in the years following the consolidation of New York City.

The firehouse is located in Downtown Far Rockaway, the Rockaway peninsula’s commercial and civic hub. City Council adopted a rezoning of the area in September 2017 (C 170243 (A) ZMQ). The rezoning was part of the City’s Downtown Far Rockaway Development Plan and it established medium-density, mixed-use zoning districts near mass transit resources and along major corridors, including Mott and Central Avenues, to support the area’s growth and vitality by fostering a vibrant mix uses on vacant and underutilized sites. In addition, a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area was established, in which permanently affordable housing is required as part of all new residential development. The City’s development plan also committed to exploring opportunities to recognize buildings in Downtown Far Rockaway for their historic significance to the area. Concurrent with the designation of the Engine Companies 264 & 328/Ladder Company 134 firehouse, LPC also designated the 53rd Precinct Police Station on Mott Avenue as a landmark.

The landmark building is located in an R6/C2-4 zoning district, which allows a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.6 for residential use. The 25,710-square-foot zoning lot could be developed with up to 92,556 square feet of floor area. The zoning lot contains 25,000 square feet of floor area (0.97 FAR). The site therefore has 67,556 square feet of unused development rights.

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 11 potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the subject 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 LPC.

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 on any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, *Esq.*, *Vice-Chairman*

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ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ, *Commissioners*