



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 27, 2019, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the James Baldwin Residence (Block 1143, Lot 19), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 18, 2019 (Designation List No. 513/LP-2636), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 7.

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 June 18, 2019, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the James Baldwin Residence, located at 137 West 71st Street (Block 1143, Lot 19) as a City landmark. The landmark site is located on the north side of West 71st Street between Columbus Avenue and Broadway, within Manhattan Community District 7.

The James Baldwin Residence is one of six buildings that the LPC designated as individual landmarks for their historical significance to the LGBT community. On the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots and coinciding with World Pride NYC, LPC recognized these sites as places associated with groups and individuals that helped move forward the LGBT civil rights movement by creating political and community support structures and by bringing LGBT cultural expression into the public realm.

The landmark site is the most significant surviving building in the United States associated with the celebrated novelist, essayist, poet, and civil rights advocate James Baldwin. Born in Harlem in 1924, Baldwin was shaped by his early experiences in New York City. Baldwin's 1955 essay collection *Notes of a Native Son* made him a leading voice on the plight of black Americans and critic of American race relations.

He would soon rise to the forefront of the Civil Rights movement with his 1961 book *Nobody Knows My Name*, containing essays based on his early travels through the American South during which he met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Extensive profiles of Baldwin were published in *Ebony* and *Life* magazines in the early 1960s, and in 1963, he was featured on the cover of a special *Time* magazine issue addressing “The Negro’s Push for Equality.” He convened a meeting between prominent African Americans and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, in which he urged the Kennedy administration to frame civil rights as a moral issue, and published *The Fire Next Time*, which cemented Baldwin’s reputation as a leading authority on the black American experience and eloquent advocate for African American rights. He continued to publish novels, including *Another Country* (1962), which contained bisexual characters and interracial romance. The 1965 production of his play *The Amen Corner* was the first Broadway play directed, produced, and performed by African Americans.

The small apartment house at 137 West 71st Street is culturally significant as the final New York residence of the celebrated novelist, essayist, and civil rights activist James Baldwin from 1966 until his death in 1987. The current facade was altered in 1961 by architect H. Russell Kenyon, who expanded an existing 1890 row house into a five-story apartment house with a sunken entrance and a Modern-style white-brick facade extending to the lot line. The primary West 71st Street facade is the only facade visible from surrounding public thoroughfares. It remains largely intact from its period of ownership and occupancy by Baldwin and his family, with minor changes to door and window replacements. In addition to its status as an individual landmark, 137 West 71st Street is within the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, which was designated by the LPC in 1990.

The landmark site is located within a R8B zoning district. R8B districts allow residential and community facility uses up to 4.0 floor area ratio (FAR). With a maximum allowable floor area ratio of 4.0 FAR, the 2,146-square-foot lot could be developed with approximately 8,584 square feet of floor area. The existing building on the lot contains 6,539 square feet (3.04 FAR), resulting in 2,045 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 which fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark. There are five potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area. Three of the five potential receiving sites are eligible to receive a transfer of unused development rights from the subject landmark.

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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