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**IN THE MATTER OF** a communication dated June 25, 2021, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the New York Public Library, Harlem Branch (Block 1722, Lot 30), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 15, 2021, (Designation List No. 524/LP-2652), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 10.

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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 June 15, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the New York Public Library, Harlem Branch as an individual landmark. The landmark designation consists of Block 1722, Lot 30. The landmark site is located at 9-11 West 124<sup>th</sup> Street, South-Central Harlem, Manhattan Community District 10.

The Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library (the Harlem Branch) is one of 67 circulating libraries constructed for the city's three public library systems in the early 20th century with funding from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. The elegant Classical Revival style building was designed by McKim, Mead & White in 1907 and opened in 1909, one of 12 Carnegie libraries designed by the firm for the New York Public Library, including five in Harlem. While sharing some characteristics with other Carnegie branches, McKim, Mead & White's design for the three-bay wide Harlem Branch has its own distinct decorative elements. The Harlem Branch underwent an extensive restoration between 2002 and 2004 in which efforts were made to maintain the building's historic character. The building, with its limestone facade above a granite base, continues to stand out as a distinctive structure in the community as intended in the program established by the Architects' Committee in 1901.

The Harlem Branch has served its South-Central Harlem neighborhood residents for more than 110 years as an important civic space for the neighborhood with a variety of resources and

programs, including providing space for civic and cultural activities. Intended by its designers to be easily recognizable as an important civic institution, its mission as a “people’s university” has included educational and cultural enrichment in the form of civic discussions, lectures, exhibits, films, classes, and live performances, such as those presented by the Rose McClendon Players and Workshop Theatre, that reflect the Harlem community identity throughout its history.

During its first two decades, the Harlem Branch sponsored literary clubs and debating societies to engage neighborhood children in reading, provided meeting spaces for community organizations such as the Harlem Council of Women, the City History Club, and a Boy Scout troop, and hosted classes from civics for the newly enfranchised women voters in 1918 to English for non-native speakers in 1922. The Harlem Branch goes beyond providing adults and children with free access to books and other materials but has continuously served its South-Central Harlem community as a space for civic engagement and cultural enrichment.

The Harlem Branch stands on a 4,743 square foot zoning lot in an R6A zoning district within the Special 125th Street District. R6A districts are medium-density residential districts that allow a maximum residential and community facility Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.0. The subject landmark contains 11,409 square feet of floor area (2.4 FAR).

Pursuant to Section 74-92 of the Zoning Resolution, in all districts except R1, R2, R3, R4 or R5 districts or C1 or C2 districts mapped within such districts, 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.

The Harlem Branch is in an R6A zoning district that allows a maximum FAR of 3.0. Given the zoning lot area, the resulting on-site maximum allowable floor area for the computation of transferable development rights is 14,229 square feet. The maximum amount of unused

development rights available for transfer from this site under the existing zoning is approximately 2,820 square feet.

There are three potential receiving sites, to which development rights may be transferred pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution that are either located across the street and opposite the landmark zoning lot or are adjacent to the landmark zoning lot. Under the existing zoning, all three potential receiving sites are eligible to receive transferable 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. 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.

**MARISA LAGO**, Chair  
**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ.**, Vice Chairman  
**DAVID BURNEY, ALLEN CAPPELLI, ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, JOSEPH DOUEK, HOPE KNIGHT, ORLANDO MARIN, RAJ RAMPERSHAD**, Commissioners

**NYC** Landmarks Preservation  
Commission

Sarah Carroll  
Chair

June 25, 2021

Honorable Marisa Lago  
Chair  
City Planning Commission  
120 Broadway, 31st Floor  
New York, New York 10271-0002

Re: Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District, Manhattan  
New York Public Library, Harlem Branch, Manhattan

Dear Chair Lago:

At its public meeting on June 15, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate the *Dorrance Brooks Square Historic District* as a New York City Historic District, and the *New York Public Library, Harlem Branch* as a New York City Landmark, in the Borough of Manhattan.

Pursuant to Section 3020 of Chapter 74 of the New York City Charter, and/or Section 25-303 of the New York City Administrative Code (the Landmarks Law), I am providing copies of the designation reports for these items.

Sincerely,



Lisa Kersavage  
Executive Director

Cc: Edith Hsu-Chen, Director of the Manhattan Office

# New York Public Library, Harlem Branch

## LOCATION

Borough of Manhattan  
9 West 124th Street (aka 9-11 West 124th  
Street)

## LANDMARK TYPE

Individual

## SIGNIFICANCE

The New York Public Library, Harlem Branch was designed by the prominent firm of McKim, Mead & White under a grant from Andrew Carnegie in the early 20th century. Since its completion in 1909, the library has served as a space for cultural and civic engagement and in the 1930s contributed to the development of community theater in Harlem when it was the home of the Rose McClendon Players and Theatre Workshop.

# New York Public Library, Harlem Branch

9 West 124th Street (aka 9-11 West 124th Street),  
Manhattan

## Designation List 524 LP-2652

**Built:** 1907-09

**Architect:** McKim, Mead & White

**Landmark Site:** Borough of Manhattan, Tax Map  
Block 1722, Lot 30

**Calendared:** February 2, 2021

**Public Hearing:** April 20, 2021

On April 20, 2021, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the New York Public Library, Harlem Branch as a New York City Landmark and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No.2). The hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of the law.

The Commission received support for the proposed designation from eight people including representatives of the owner, the New York Public Library; Manhattan Borough President Gail A. Brewer; the New York Landmarks Conservancy; Historic Districts Council; Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association; Save Harlem Now; and neighborhood residents. No one spoke in opposition. The Commission also received two written submissions in support of the proposed designation from Landmark East Harlem and one individual.

## Summary

New York Public Library, Harlem Branch

Located on West 124th Street across from Marcus Garvey Park (formerly Mount Morris Park), the Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library is one of 67 circulating libraries constructed for the city's three public library systems in the early 20th century with funding from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. The elegant Classical Revival style building was designed by the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White in 1907 and opened in 1909, one of 12 Carnegie libraries designed by the firm for the New York Public Library, including five in Harlem.

The circulating library that became the New York Public Library's Harlem Branch was originally established as a privately-operated subscription library in 1825 when Harlem was an isolated village then centered around Third Avenue. As development increased in Harlem in the late 19th century, the trustees of the Harlem Library purchased a lot at 32 West 123rd Street where they erected a four-story building (Edgar K. Bourne, 1891-92, located within the Mount Morris Park Historic District) with the library on the ground floor and income-producing apartments on the upper floors. The Harlem Library became a free circulating library in 1897 when it dropped its subscription fees and in 1903 it merged with the New York Public Library's circulating branch system which had been established in 1901.

Since its construction, the Harlem Branch has served as an important civic space for the neighborhood with a variety of resources and programs as well as providing space for civic and cultural activities, which in the late 1930s included

community theater. The African American actor/playwright Ossie Davis who performed with the Rose McClendon Players Workshop based in the Harlem Branch referred to the library as "the only home I had...the very temple of my existence, my craft, the place that trained me, the first institution to welcome me."

The library's limestone facade is raised on a low granite base and features large recessed arched openings at the first and second stories, decorated with rosettes at the first story and alternating roundels and diamond-shaped lozenges at the second. The window openings of the third story are flatheaded with simple surrounds slightly recessed from the plane of the wall. Double-height pilasters with Corinthian capitals frame the fenestration of the second and third stories, their bases resting on a denticulated sill course at the second story. Below the denticulated cornice, the frieze bears the words "New York Public Library" separated by plaques in the form of open books with fleur-de-lis. The library underwent a renovation between 2002 and 2004 that included minimal sensitive alterations to the exterior, including the replacement of the entrance door and windows.

Intended by its designers to be easily recognizable as an important civic institution, the Harlem Branch with its classically-inspired limestone facade has continuously served its South Central Harlem community as a place to find recreational and educational resources as well as a space for civic engagement and cultural enrichment.

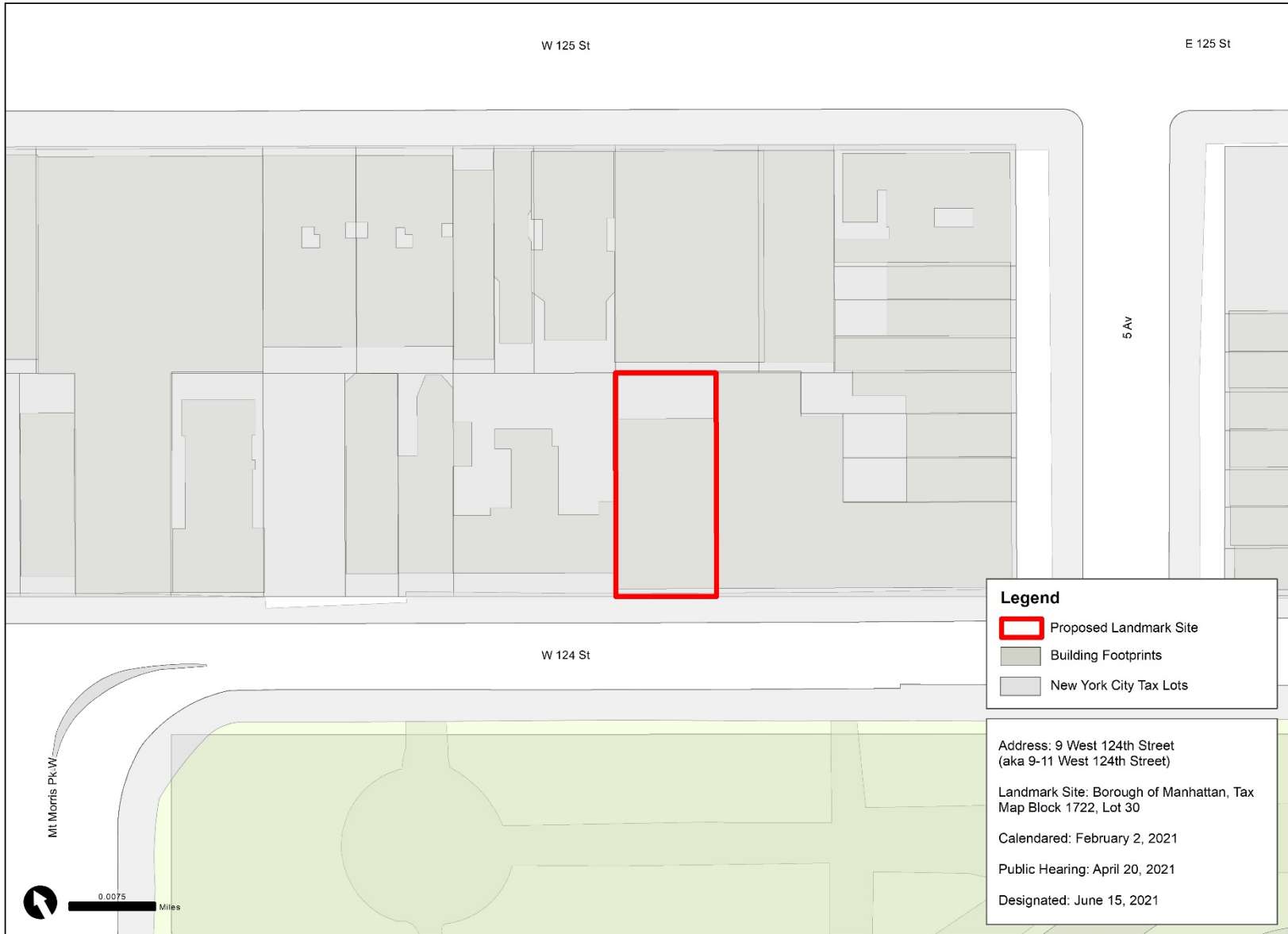
## Findings and Designation

New York Public Library, Harlem Branch

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and the other features of this building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the New York Public Library, Harlem Branch has a special character and a special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

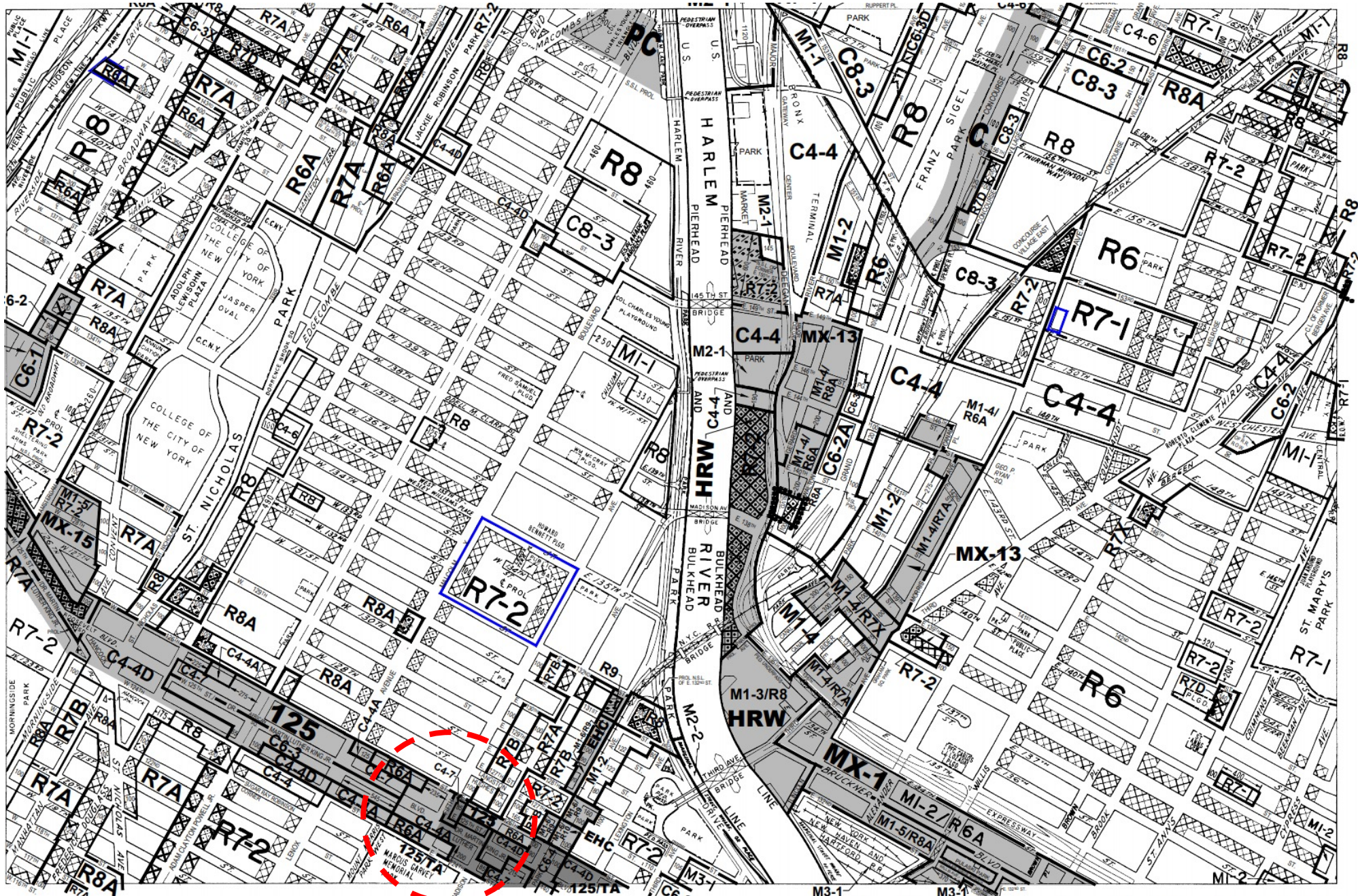
Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the New York Public Library, Harlem Branch and designates Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1722, Lot 30 as its Landmark Site, as shown in the attached map.





Graphic Source: MapPLUTO, Edition 20v7, Author: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, MD, Date: 6.8.2021





# ZONING MAP

THE NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

## Major Zoning Classifications:

The number(s) and/or letter(s) that follows on R, C or M District designation indicates use, bulk and other controls as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

- R – RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
- C – COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
- M – MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICT  
The letter(s) within the shaded area designates the special purpose district as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

AREA(S) REZONED

## Effective Date(s) of Rezoning:

05-27-2021 C 200286 ZMX

## Special Requirements:

For a list of lots subject to CEQR environmental requirements, see APPENDIX C.

For a list of lots subject to "D" restrictive declarations, see APPENDIX D.

For Inclusionary Housing designated areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing areas on this map, see APPENDIX F.

### MAP KEY

	3b	3d
5c	<b>6a</b>	6c
5d	6b	6d

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**NOTE:** Zoning information as shown on this map is subject to change. For the most up-to-date zoning information for this map, visit the Zoning section of the Department of City Planning website: [www.nyc.gov/planning](http://www.nyc.gov/planning) or contact the Zoning Information Desk at (212) 720-3291.

- C1-1
- C1-2
- C1-3
- C1-4
- C1-5
- C2-1
- C2-2
- C2-3
- C2-4
- C2-5

**NOTE:** Where no dimensions for zoning district boundaries appear on the zoning maps, such dimensions are determined in Article VII, Chapter 6 (Location of District Boundaries) of the Zoning Resolution.

ZONING MAP 6a



# New York Public Library Harlem Branch Area Map

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission



## Project

- Project Area
- Development Site
- Rezoning Area
- 600 Foot Radius

## Zoning

- Zoning District
- C1-1
- C1-2
- C1-3
- C1-4
- C1-5
- C2-1
- C2-2
- C2-3
- C2-4
- C2-5
- Special Purpose District

## Land Use

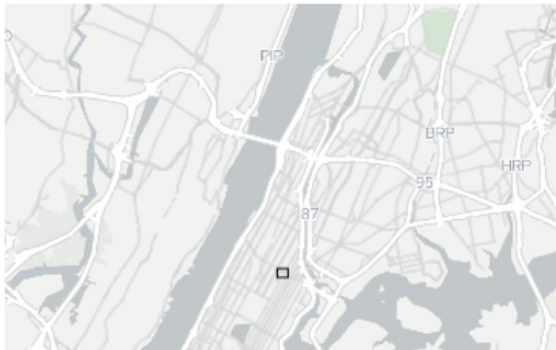
- 1-2 Family Residential
- Multifamily Walkup
- Multifamily Elevator
- Mixed Commercial/Residential
- Commercial & Office
- Industrial & Mfg
- Transportation & Utility
- Public Facilities & Institutions
- Open Space & Outdoor Recreation
- Parking
- Vacant/No Data
- Other

## Transportation

- Subway Stop
- Subway Entrance

Map Created: Jul 15, 2021, 2:05pm

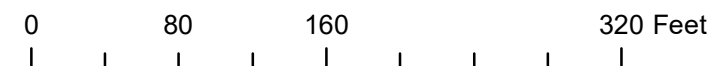
Data Sources: layers-api.planninglabs.nyc/v1/sources  
 pluto MapPLUTO™ 20v8, Bytes of the Big Apple (February 2021); zoning-districts (March 2021); digital-citymap (March 2021); planimetrics (26 February 2019); transportation (21 November 2017); supporting-zoning (March 2021)



# New York Public Library Harlem Branch (Block 1722 Lot 30)



	Special Subdistrict
	Special District
	Landmark Site (NYPLHB)
	Site Eligible for Landmark Transfer
	Park
	Zoning Districts
	Subway 2,3 line



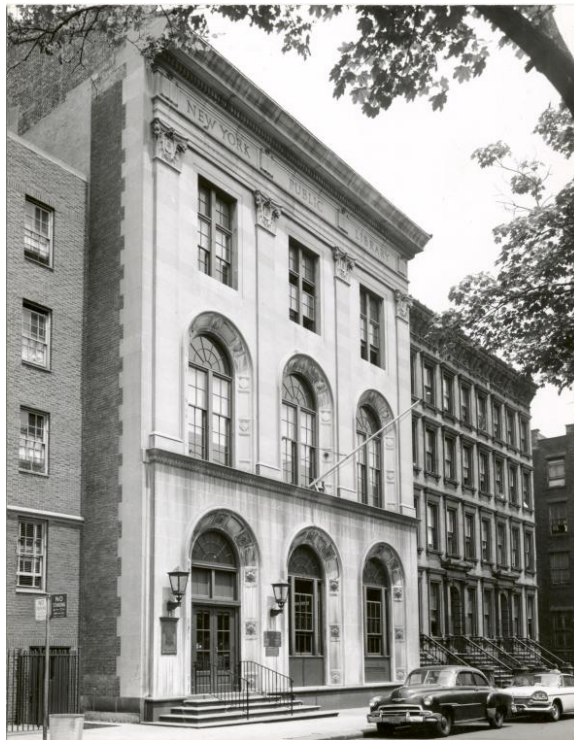




**New York Public Library, Harlem Branch**  
**9 West 124th Street (aka 9-11 West 124th Street)**  
Jessica Baldwin, June 2021



**Harlem Branch, Exterior, West 124th Street [c.1910]**  
New York Public Library



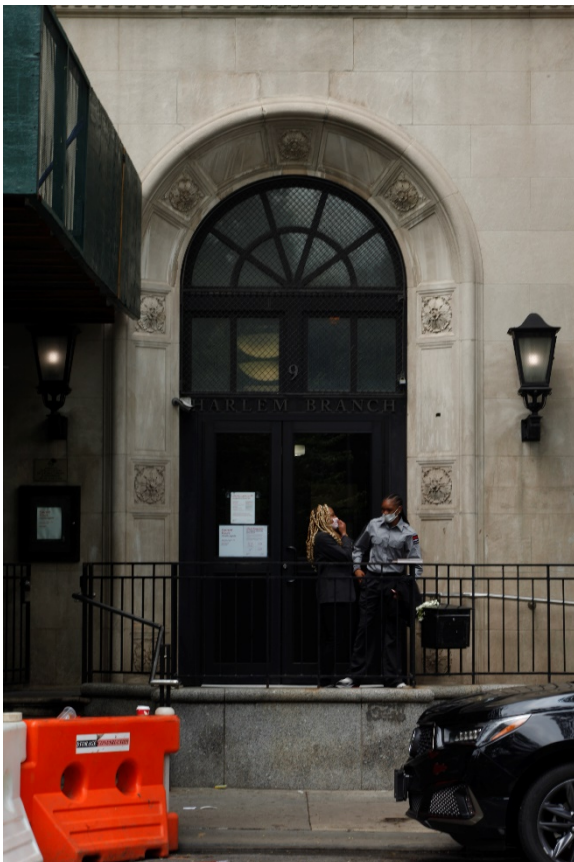
**Harlem Library Exterior [c.1950]**  
New York Public Library





**New York Public Library, Harlem Branch, Third  
Story Detail**

Jessica Baldwin, June 2021



**New York Public Library, Harlem Branch,  
Entrance Detail**

Jessica Baldwin, June 2021



**New York Public Library, Harlem Branch, First Story Detail**  
Marianne Percival, May 2021



**New York Public Library, Harlem Branch, Second Story Detail**  
Marianne Percival, May 2021





## Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Bill de Blasio, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Marisa Lago, Chair

# **74-79 - Transfer of Development Rights From Landmark Sites**

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## 74-79 - Transfer of Development Rights From Landmark Sites

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LAST AMENDED

2/2/2011

In all districts except R1, R2, R3, R4 or R5 Districts or C1 or C2 Districts mapped within such districts, for #developments# or #enlargements#, the City Planning Commission may permit development rights to be transferred to adjacent lots from lots occupied by landmark #buildings or other structures#, may permit the maximum permitted #floor area# on such adjacent lot to be increased on the basis of such transfer of development rights, may permit, in the case of #developments# or #enlargements# containing #residences#, the minimum required #open space# or the density requirements to be reduced on the basis of such transfer of development rights, may permit variations in the front height and setback regulations and the regulations governing the size of required loading berths, and minor variations in #public plaza#, #arcade# and #yard# regulations, for the purpose of providing a harmonious architectural relationship between the #development# or #enlargement# and the landmark #building or other structure#.

Where a #zoning lot# occupied by a landmark #building or other structure# is located in a #Residence District#, the Commission may modify the applicable regulation of primary business entrances, #show windows#, #signs# and entrances and exits to #accessory# off-street loading berths on the "adjacent lot" in a #Commercial District# provided that such modifications will not adversely affect the harmonious relationship between the #building# on the "adjacent lot" and landmark #building or other structure#.

For the purposes of this Section, the term "adjacent lot" shall mean a lot that is contiguous to the lot occupied by the landmark #building or other structure# or one that is across a #street# and opposite the lot occupied by the landmark #building or other structure#, or, in the case of a #corner lot#, one that fronts on the same #street# intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark #building or other structure#. It shall also mean, in the case of lots located in C5-3, C5-5, C6-6, C6-7 or C6-9 Districts, a lot contiguous or one that is across a #street# and opposite to another lot or lots that except for the intervention of #streets# or #street# intersections, form a series extending to the lot occupied by the landmark #building or other structure#. All such lots shall be in the same ownership (fee ownership or ownership as defined under #zoning lot# in Section 12-10).

A "landmark #building or other structure#" shall include any structure designated as a landmark by the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Board of Estimate pursuant to Chapter 8-A of the New York City Charter and Chapter 8-A of the New York City Administrative Code, but shall not include those portions of #zoning lots# used for cemetery purposes, statues, monuments and bridges. No transfer of development rights is permitted pursuant to this Section from those portions of #zoning lots# used for cemetery purposes, any structures within historic districts, statues, monuments or bridges.

The grant of any special permit authorizing the transfer and use of such development rights shall be in accordance with all the regulations set forth in Sections 74-791 (Requirements for application), 74-792 (Conditions and limitations) and 74-793 (Transfer instruments and notice of restrictions).

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### 74-791 - Requirements for application

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LAST AMENDED

2/2/2011

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.

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## 74-792 - Conditions and limitations

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LAST AMENDED

2/2/2011

- (a) For the purposes of this Section, except in C5-3, C5-5, C6-6, C6-7 or C6-9 Districts, the basic maximum allowable #floor area# for a #zoning lot# occupied by a landmark shall be the maximum #floor area# allowed by the applicable district regulations on maximum #floor area ratio# or minimum required #open space ratio# and shall not include any additional #floor area# allowed for #public plazas#, #arcades# or any other form of bonus whether by right or special permit.
- (b) The maximum amount of #floor area# that may be transferred from any #zoning lot# occupied by a landmark #building# shall be computed in the following manner:
  - (1) the maximum allowable #floor area# that could be built for #buildings# other than #community facility buildings# under existing district regulations on the same #zoning lot# if it were undeveloped;
  - (2) less the total #floor area# of all #buildings# on the landmark lot;
  - (3) the figure computed from paragraphs (a) and (b) of this Section, inclusive, shall be the maximum amount that may be transferred to any one or number of adjacent lots; and
  - (4) unutilized #floor area# may be transferred from one or any number of #zoning lots# occupied by a landmark #building# to one or any number of #zoning lots# adjacent to the landmark lot so as to increase the basic maximum allowable #floor area# that may be utilized on such adjacent #zoning lots#. For each such adjacent #zoning lot#, the increase in #floor area# allowed under the provisions of this Section shall in no event exceed the basic maximum #floor area# allowable on such adjacent #zoning lot# by more than 20 percent.
- (c) When adjacent lots are located in C5-3, C5-5, C6-6, C6-7 or C6-9 Districts and are to be #developed# or #enlarged# with #commercial buildings#, the following conditions and limitations shall apply:
  - (1) the maximum amount of #floor area# that may be transferred from any #zoning lot# occupied by a landmark #building# shall be the maximum #floor area# allowed by Section 33-12 for #commercial buildings# on said landmark #zoning lot#, as if it were undeveloped, less the total #floor area# of all existing #buildings# on the landmark #zoning lot#;
  - (2) for each such adjacent #zoning lot#, the increase in #floor area# allowed by the transfer pursuant to this Section shall be over and above the maximum #floor area# allowed by the applicable district regulations; and
  - (3) the City Planning Commission may require, where appropriate, that the design of the #development# or #enlargement# include provisions for public amenities such as, but not limited to, open public spaces, subsurface pedestrian passageways leading to public transportation facilities, #public plazas# and #arcades#.
- (d) In any and all districts, the transfer once completed shall irrevocably reduce the amount of #floor area# that can be utilized upon the lot occupied by a landmark by the amount of #floor area# transferred. In the event that the landmark's designation is removed or if the landmark #building# is destroyed, or if for any reason the landmark #building# is #enlarged# or the landmark lot is redeveloped, the lot occupied by a landmark can only be #developed# or #enlarged# up to the amount of permitted #floor area# as reduced by the transfer.
- (e) As a condition of permitting such transfers of development rights, the Commission shall make the following findings:

- (1) that the permitted transfer of #floor area# or variations in the front height and setback regulations will not unduly increase the #bulk# of any #development# or #enlargement#, density of population or intensity of use in any #block# to the detriment of the occupants of #buildings# on the #block# or nearby #blocks#, and that any disadvantages to the surrounding area caused by reduced access of light and air will be more than offset by the advantages of the landmark's preservation to the local community and the City as a whole;
- (2) that the program for continuing maintenance will result in the preservation of the landmark; and
- (3) that in the case of landmark sites owned by the City, State or Federal Government, transfer of development rights shall be contingent upon provision by the applicant of a major improvement of the public pedestrian circulation or transportation system in the area.

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#.

The Commission may prescribe appropriate conditions and safeguards to minimize adverse effects on the character of the surrounding area.

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### **74-793 - Transfer instruments and notice of restrictions**

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LAST AMENDED  
2/2/2011

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.



## Zoning Resolution

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Bill de Blasio, Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Marisa Lago, Chair

# **74-711 - Landmark preservation in all districts**

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## 74-711 - Landmark preservation in all districts

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LAST AMENDED

2/2/2011

In all districts, for #zoning lots# containing a landmark designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, or for #zoning lots# with existing #buildings# located within Historic Districts designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the City Planning Commission may permit modification of the #use# and #bulk# regulations, except #floor area ratio# regulations, provided that:

- (a) The following conditions are met:
  - (1) any application pursuant to this Section shall include a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that a program has been established for continuing maintenance that will result in the preservation of the subject #building# or #buildings#, and that such #use# or #bulk# modifications, or restorative work required under the continuing maintenance program, contributes to a preservation purpose;
  - (2) any application pursuant to this Section shall include a Certificate of Appropriateness, other permit, or report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that such #bulk# modifications relate harmoniously to the subject landmark #building# or #buildings# in the Historic District, as applicable; and
  - (3) the maximum number of #dwelling units# shall be as set forth in Section 15-111 (Number of permitted dwelling units).
  
- (b) In order to grant a special permit, the City Planning Commission shall find that:
  - (1) such #bulk# modifications shall have minimal adverse effects on the structures or #open space# in the vicinity in terms of scale, location and access to light and air; and
  - (2) such #use# modifications shall have minimal adverse effects on the conforming #uses# within the #building# and in the surrounding area.

The Commission may prescribe appropriate additional conditions and safeguards which will enhance the character of the #development# and #buildings# on the #zoning lot#.