



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 26, 2008/Calendar No. 14

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IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated February 15, 2008, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the former Jamaica Savings Bank, 161-02 Jamaica Avenue (Block 10101, Lot 9) by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on February 12, 2008 (List No. 401/LP No. 2109), Borough of Queens, Community District 12.

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.

The former Jamaica Savings bank is located on the south side of Jamaica Avenue at the intersection with 161st Street, in the commercial core of downtown Jamaica. Constructed between 1897 and 1898, it features a striking and well-preserved Beaux Arts facade with richly detailed stone and iron work. The four-story structure is one of the only examples of Beaux Arts architecture to exist in the borough of Queens.

The building was designed by the noted architectural firm of Hough & Duell and built for the Jamaica Savings Bank, which was the oldest and most prestigious banking institution in Jamaica at the time of construction. The landmark building has been vacant since 1964, when the banking company moved across Jamaica Avenue to a more modern structure.

The landmark site is located in a C6-3 zoning district. It is also within the Special Downtown Jamaica District (DJ). With an allowable floor area ratio (FAR) of 8.0 for C6-3 zones within DJ, the zoning lot could be developed with approximately 65,120 square feet of floor area. The former Jamaica Savings Bank contains approximately 12,000 square feet of floor area, leaving approximately 53,120 square feet available for transfer. There are approximately six potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the landmark's unused floor area.

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 which 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 building.

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

The subject landmark designation does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

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