



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 17, 2018 / Calendar No. 16

N 180169 HKX

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated December 8, 2017, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Stafford “Osborn” House, 95 Pell Place (Block 5626, Lot 221), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on November 28, 2017 (Designation List No. 502/ LP No. 2479), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 10.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the New York 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 November 28, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Stafford “Osborn” House, at 95 Pell Place (Block 5626, Lot 221), as a City landmark.

The family of John H. Stafford (yacht captain to Marshall Field III) purchased the mail-order home from Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1929 or early 1930 to construct on a lot in City Island that they had owned since 1925. Between 1908 and 1940, Sears sold upwards of 50,000 houses in more than 400 different models through its Modern Homes division, becoming the nation's largest and most popular purveyor of factory-produced mail-order homes. The one-story Craftsman style stucco-and-shingle bungalow is an example of Sears' "Osborn" house model, which was offered in every Modern Homes catalogue from 1916 until 1929.

Typical of many Sears catalogue homebuyers, the Stafford family chose the Osborn model for its affordability, charm, and modern conveniences, and hired a local contractor to assemble the house on site. The Osborn also featured a narrow plan that made it well-suited for a city tax lot, as well as front and side porches with prominent gabled roofs and rustic materials such as stucco, wood timbers, and brick. In advertisements, it was noted that the Osborn was inspired by the "Golden West" age of Hollywood. The Stafford family also purchased a garage from Sears, which was erected to the rear of the house.

Factory-produced mail-order homes like Stafford “Osborn” house were popularized in New York City boroughs other than Manhattan during the early 20th century in response to a housing shortage and increased migration to these boroughs. According to the LPC, despite some minor maintenance-related modifications, the Stafford “Osborn” House survives as a remarkably intact Sears mail-order house, and represents an important period in the history of American housing and in the development of City Island as a suburban community.

The building is located in the City Island Special District. The area around the house is predominantly characterized by one- and two-family detached residential buildings. City Island Avenue, City Island’s main commercial corridor, is located to the east of the subject site. The building is situated in a R3A zoning district which permits single- and two-family homes up to a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.5 for residential buildings and 1.0 for community facilities. The single-family Stafford “Osborn” House has a total floor area of 1,250 square feet on a 4,750-square-foot lot, generating a built FAR of 0.26. Transfer of development rights is not applicable in R3A zoning districts, pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution.

Pursuant to 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 or any plans for development, growth, improvement or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

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

RAYANN BESSER, ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,

MICHELLE DE LA UZ, RICHARD W. EADDY,

CHERYL COHEN EFFRON, HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,

ORLANDO MARIN, LARISA ORTIZ, *Commissioners*