



Sunnyside Gardens Rezoning - **Approved!**

Introduction and Public Review

Update June 10, 2009:

On June 10, 2009, the City Council adopted the Sunnyside Gardens Text Amendment. The text changes are now in effect.

Introduction

The Department of City Planning proposes a zoning text amendment to modify the provisions of the Special Planned Community Preservation (PC) District as they relate to Sunnyside Gardens, located in Community District 2 in western Queens. The proposed regulations would apply to all or portions of the 16 blocks generally located between 43rd and 52nd streets, Queens Boulevard and Barnett Avenue that were designated a Special Planned Community Preservation District in 1974.

The amendment is proposed to complement the June 26, 2007 designation of Sunnyside Gardens by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) as a New York City Historic District. As the LPC now regulates all changes to the unique site plan and structures of Sunnyside Gardens, the proposed text amendment seeks to eliminate duplicative reviews and ensure a complementary relationship between zoning provisions and landmark regulations.



Semi-detached homes at Hamilton Court



Attached row-houses at Washington Court along 43rd Avenue



Communal garden at Madison Court



46th Street between Skillman and 39th Avenue

Public Review

On August 20, 2007, the Sunnyside Gardens Special Planned Community Preservation District text amendment proposal

was referred to Community Board 2 and the Queens Borough President for comment under a concurrent 60-day review period. On December 12, 2007, Community Board 2 submitted their recommendation for approval with conditions that requested additional restrictions be included in the text change.

On January 9, 2008, the Department withdrew its original application and filed a new text amendment that was similar to the original proposal except it included tighter floor area provisions based upon standard R4 regulations. This application was referred out for a 30-day period and the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the matter on February 13, 2008.

At the public hearing and during the public review for the text amendment, members of the community expressed concerns regarding the proposed process of enforcement for certain distinctive features of Sunnyside Gardens, particularly the open quality of the original central courts. In response to these concerns, the City Planning Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Commission have undertaken an extensive review of how the new zoning regulations, combined with historic district regulation, will protect the significant planning and preservation features of Sunnyside Gardens. With resolution as to how the Landmarks Preservation Commission will regulate changes to the rear yard portions of the Gardens, the City Planning Commission voted to approve the Sunnyside Gardens text amendment on April 22nd, 2009. On June 10, 2009, the City Council adopted the Sunnyside Gardens Text Amendment. The text changes are now in effect.

For more information, contact the Queens Office of the Department of City Planning at (718) 520-2100.

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Existing Context

Sunnyside Gardens is a predominantly residential area encompassing part of 16 blocks following the city's traditional grid street pattern within the larger Sunnyside neighborhood of Queens. Located between 43rd and 52nd streets, Queens Boulevard and Barnett Avenue, Sunnyside Gardens was developed between 1924 and 1928 by the City Housing Corporation and designed by architects Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Frederick Ackerman and landscape architect Marjorie Cautley based upon the English Garden City model. The neighborhood is comprised of roughly 600 two-story row houses in combinations of one-, two, and three-family units grouped in clusters of 10 to 12 around a series of courts containing common gardens, in addition to eighteen apartment buildings, two community parks and neighborhood stores. The common gardens account for over 70 percent of the lot area and are a primary defining feature of the site plan, offering residents light, air and greenery.

In 1974, Sunnyside Gardens, along with Fresh Meadows in Queens, Parkchester in the Bronx, and Harlem River Houses in Manhattan, were designated Special Planned Community Preservation (PC) Districts to protect their distinctive character and site plans. General purposes of the Special Planned Community Preservation District are:

- (a) to preserve and protect the Special Districts as superior examples of town planning or large-scale development;
- (b) to preserve and protect the character and integrity of these unique communities which, by their existing site plan, pedestrian and vehicular circulation system, balance between buildings and open space, harmonious scale of the development, related commercial uses, open space arrangement and landscaping add to the quality of urban life;
- (c) to preserve and protect the variety of neighborhoods and communities that presently exist which contribute greatly to the livability of New York City;
- (d) to maintain and protect the environmental quality that the Special District offers to its residents and the City-at-large; and
- (e) to guide future development within the Special Districts that is consistent with the existing character, quality and amenity of the Special District.

Sunnyside Gardens includes R4, R7-1, C4-2 and M1-1 zoning districts. Currently in the Sunnyside Gardens Special Planned Community Preservation District (SGPC) no new development, enlargement, demolition of buildings or substantial alteration of landscaping or topography is permitted within the Special Planned Community Preservation District except by special permit of the City Planning Commission.



[View a Larger Image](#)



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Proposed Zoning

With the recent designation of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, the Landmarks Preservation Commission will now regulate construction within the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District, which generally coincides with the boundaries of the SGPC district. The proposed text amendment seeks to relieve property owners within Sunnyside Gardens of the burden of applying both to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and to the City Planning Commission for modifications to their properties.

The proposed text amendment would eliminate existing City Planning Commission special permit requirements for development, enlargement, or substantial alteration of landscaping or topography in the Sunnyside Gardens Special Planned Community (PC) Preservation District. The proposed regulations would make all properties within the underlying residential and commercial districts of the Special District subject to the regulations of an R4 district. (See the [zoning comparison table](#)). The proposed uniform R4 regulations will result in predictable construction consistent with the historic character of Sunnyside Gardens. The proposed text amendment also maintains the existing prohibition on curb cuts.

 View the [proposed text amendment](#).

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).