BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 8
LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT
Meeting Date: Thursday, April 2, 2020, 6:30 PM – 8:15 PM
Place: FreeConferenceCall.com

Attendees:

Land Use Committee Members
1. Janet Collins
2. Nora Daniel
3. Phu Duong
4. Peter Krashes
5. Sarah Lazur
6. Carl Riddle
7. Ethel Tyus
8. Gib Veconi
9. Irsa Weatherspoon
10. Sharon Wedderburn
11. Deborah Young

Guests
1. Alez?
2. Yemi Amu
3. Sergio Cardozo
4. Taylor Eve
5. Julia Keiser
6. D.M. Michelle George
7. Edison Lin
8. Amber Mazur
9. Zulmilena Then
10. Jared Tresko
11. Anita Warren
12. Nicholas Wilder

Action Items:

1. LPC CoA Application for Handicap Lift at 1370 Dean St (Crown Heights North Historic District)
   Nick Wilder, R.A. and Edison Lin presented a plan to install an inclined handicapped lift over a broadened staircase at the front entryway of this 1885 Queen Anne semi-attached brick and stone row house designed by G.A. Schellenger.

   Retrospective
   On Oct, 15, 2017, Mr. Wilder presented a plan to enlarge it from a one-family residence into four apartments. He indicated he had met with LPC several times and that reducing the planned expansion from four or three stories to two stories would reduce the financial viability of the project. He is aware that the site is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Committee voted unanimously with 14 in favor to withhold support. CB 8’s letter denying support was sent to LPC on Oct. 16, 2017.

   At our Jan. 3, 2019 meeting, Mr. Wilder explained that the plan to convert the building to a four-family from a one-family triggers a requirement for ADA-compliant access enforced by the Dep’t of Buildings (DoB). Based on the ‘visual cacophony’ that would be created by the clunky wheelchair lift presented or a ramp and the adverse impact on the primary façade of a relatively small building in a historic district and the immediate streetscape, CB 8’s Land Use Committee voted unanimously with 14 in favor to deny support. Notwithstanding CB 8’s advice, on Feb. 19, 2019, LPC issued COFA-19-24500 for the enlargement.

   Attendees at the Apr. 2, 2020 virtual meeting, included immediate neighbor Amber Mazur of 1372 Dean St who complained that the building enlargement should not be
approved because the applicant had not demonstrated a financial hardship. The Crown Heights North Association (CHNA) provided a letter to the applicant recommending that the incised knee wall be retained, and that the railings and ironwork be black and appropriate to the historic district. Given the much less obstructive design and Mssrs. Wilder & Lin agreeing to CHNA’s recommendations, Ms. Weatherspoon moved the Committee to support the modified proposal for the lift. Mr. Veconi seconded and the Committee voted five in favor, with one against, and one abstention. Given the current NYS Emergency Declaration, the Committee’s vote will be sent directly to LPC.

2. LPC CoA Application for Rear Deck at 1003 Sterling Place (Crown Heights North Historic District)

Jared Tresko, RA, made a second presentation of plans to convert the roof of the existing ground floor extension into a deck/screened porch/three-season room and convert West parlor floor window into a door to the deck. Again, there was an issue of no notice to the neighbors. Mr. Tresko did provide a Sanborn building footprint map for the block to show the number of other extensions in the donut hole. Given the difficulties of organizing a virtual meeting, the Committee requested that Mr. Tresko return in May and provide notice to the neighbors on either side and in the rear. The applicant agreed and the item was tabled.

3. LPC CoA Application for Oko Farms Site with Aquaponics at Weeksville Heritage Center

Representatives Anita Warren, Zulmilena Then, and Yemi Amu presented additional information on Oko Farms’ project plans for creating a sustainable source of locally raised protein (fish) and vegetables while increasing the number of people with the knowledge and skills to practice aquaponics and urban farming in the area that will be used for the project. The location of the grow beds is reportedly in landmarked areas of the site. The precise locations of the landmarked segments and the grow beds within those segments was not clear in the materials provided; nor are the grow bed locations confirmed in the plan under consideration. Oko is working in partnership with Parsons School of Design. The presenters were asked and agreed to return in May with the final draft after consulting with Parsons. Committee members requested the materials that the applicant will submit to LPC. The applicant agreed and the item was tabled.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel Tyus
Date: 4/9/20