

## Understanding How to Locate Board of Standards and Appeals Information

by Christine Bruzzese

**Purpose of Board.** The New York City Board of Standards and Appeals was founded in 1916. Membership consists of five full-time Commissioners. Appointments are made by the Mayor and subject to City Council approval. Members must include one registered architect, one professional engineer and one planner. No more than two commissioners may live in the same borough. The main purpose of the Board is to hear and make decisions on appeals from property owners who have filed construction or zoning applications and been rejected. The usual reason for rejection is that such enforcement agencies as the Fire Department, Dept. of Buildings or Dept. of Business Services may decide that the proposed changes are against the established law.

**Bulletins.** The *Bulletin of the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals* is issued weekly. Each issue includes minutes of the meeting covered (usually the previous week's) and decisions rendered. There is also a docket of new cases and a calendar of upcoming cases to be heard, listed by category. The City Hall Library maintains holdings from 1916 to 2002. The years 1916 to 1973 are on microfilm. For 1974 to 2002, hard copy is available. However, print copies of the *Bulletin* are no longer received. Meeting summaries can be found at the Board of Standards and Appeals website. See below for details.

**Numbering system.** As outlined in the *Rules of Practice and Procedure* of the Board case numbers for each calendar item are assigned as follows: A calendar number, followed by the year and then abbreviation indicating the nature of the case. The numbering system is consecutive and starts anew with each calendar year. An example of a case number is 214-01-BZ. 214 is the calendar number assigned, 01 means the calendar year is 2001 and BZ stands for Zoning Calendar, indicating that this is a zoning case. Other abbreviations can be found in the *Rules of Practice and Procedure*. Please note that the original calendar number will still be in use if the case is reopened years later for appeal or amendment. When trying to locate Board of Standards and Appeals cases, it is necessary to have this number and then go through the contents of issues of the Bulletin to locate the date(s) when the case came up for discussion. There are no other finding aids such as a keyword index or an online database.

**Website.** The Board of Standards and Appeals website is located at [www.nyc.gov/html/bsa](http://www.nyc.gov/html/bsa). *Bulletins* for the current year and an archive dating back to 2001 can be found here. Current *Rules of Procedure*, forms, fee schedules and staff listings are available on the website. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, the Board may hold special hearings and meetings. Agenda for these meetings back to 2005 are on the website. For earlier years, check with the Board of Standards and Appeals at (212) 788-8500.