



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated June 22, 2023, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Firehouse, Engine Company 88/ Ladder Company 38 (Block 3086, Lot 38), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on June 13, 2023 (Designation List No. 533/LP-2669), Borough of the Bronx, Community District 6.

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 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 June 13, 2023, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Firehouse, Engine Company 88/ Ladder Company 38 as an individual landmark. The landmark designation consists of Block 3086, Lot 38. The landmark site is located at 2223-2225 Belmont Avenue in Belmont, Bronx Community District 6.

Located in the Belmont neighborhood of the Bronx, the landmark site is on the west side of Belmont Avenue, between East 182nd and East 183rd streets. The Firehouse, Engine Company 88/Ladder Company 38 has served Belmont for 115 years in a building whose original design and construction have remained largely intact. Designed by notable New York architects Herts & Tallant and built in 1908 prior to the adoption of the standardized Model Fire House Plan, the Engine Company 88/ Ladder Company 38 Firehouse is a rare example of the firm's work in civic architecture and the only known example of Prairie School-influenced design in a New York City firehouse.

The Engine Company 88/Ladder Company 38 firehouse was constructed in 1908 to serve the growing population of Belmont. This impressive example of early-20th century civic architecture is adorned with Prairie style elements, including deeply set windows with a grand bracketed limestone window enframingent and decorative brickwork executed in both standard

and Roman brick. This building's design is also noteworthy because it was built to accommodate both horses and mechanized firefighting equipment. Because of its relatively narrow midblock location, living quarters are located on the second and third floors, above twin apparatus bays and facilities originally designed for horses housed on the ground floor. Carved stone plaques in the spandrels above the bays identify the two companies.

In 1872, before the firehouse was built, the Site was the location of the McManus home, and across the street, sat the Grote mansion. The circa-1860 Grote mansion eventually became Aquinas Hall, a Catholic girls' high school, and the Notre Dame Home for the aged was constructed at the south end of the property. To the west of the firehouse, the Lorillard mansion, which leant its name "Belmont" to the neighborhood, became the Home for Incurables, at the present-day location of St. Barnabas Hospital. In 1896, the street name was changed to Belmont Avenue.

The architectural firm of Herts & Tallant, known for their designs of elaborate Broadway theaters, took a daring departure from the more conventionally styled firehouses of the 19th Century, choosing to eschew classical ornamentation and design a modern firehouse in the emerging Prairie style for Engine Company 88/Ladder Company 38 in Belmont. While other architects were designing Prairie-style firehouses during this same time period (including Kiehnel and Elliott in Pittsburgh, and Curtis E. Ohme in Billings, Montana), Herts & Tallants' Belmont firehouse was the first, and to this day the only firehouse of this style in New York City.

The Engine Company 88/Ladder Company 38 firehouse sits on two midblock tax lots that were combined for the firehouse's construction. The firehouse was originally divided into two separate facilities for each company and was completely bisected by a wall running the depth of the building. The lot is relatively narrow at 50 feet, and this, along with the mirrored design of the two companies' quarters, necessitated verticality in the firehouse's design. The ground floor of the firehouse originally contained a combined total of ten horse stalls, a watch desk for each company, and room for storage of steam engines, ladders, and other apparatus. Offices were

located on the second floor, along with sleeping quarters and toilets occupying what was deemed a “dormitory floor”. The third story housed a “recreation room” as well as locker rooms and storage. Because it was common practice for the firefighters to eat their meals at home, there were no kitchen facilities in the original firehouse design.

In 1920, Engine Company 88 transitioned away from horse-drawn and towards motorized equipment, allowing the former stable area to be converted to a kitchen. After over half a century of the two companies operating in mirrored facilities, the interior wall was demolished around 1968. This allowed for more efficient function of the two companies, as some duties such as manning the watch desk no longer required two people.

The Engine and Ladder Companies that have occupied the firehouse for over a century have played a significant role in the Belmont neighborhood of the Bronx and the fire house represents their history and contributions as well.

The historic site is located within an R7-1 zoning district. R7 districts are medium-density apartment house districts mapped in much of the Bronx as well as the Upper West Side in Manhattan and Brighton Beach in Brooklyn. The height factor regulations for R7 districts encourage lower apartment buildings on smaller zoning lots and, on larger lots, taller buildings with less lot coverage. Regulations for residential development in R7-1 and R7-2 districts are essentially the same except that R7-2 districts, which are mapped primarily in upper Manhattan, have lower parking requirements.

The Engine Company 88/ Ladder Company 38 firehouse sits on a 4,999 square foot lot that has a maximum allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.44 for residential use and 4.8 FAR for community facility use. The landmark site is currently used as a community facility (built to 2.28 FAR). Pursuant to Section 74-792 of the Zoning Resolution, the maximum FAR for the purposes of transfer of unused floor area from the landmark lot is 3.44 FAR. The maximum allowable floor area is approximately 17,196 square feet. The landmark site is developed with approximately 11,400 square feet of floor area; consequently, it has approximately 5,796 square

feet of unused development rights available for transfer.

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. There are seven potential receiving sites; all seven of these sites are eligible to receive the landmark's unused floor area as transferable development rights.

Pursuant to Section 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. 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.

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