



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 5, 2007/Calendar No. 12

C 070513 HAM

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

- 1) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a. the designation of property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block 1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b. an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
- 2) pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a seven-story mixed-use building, tentatively known as Colon Plaza, with approximately 55 residential units, commercial and community facility space to be developed under the New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal's Homes for Working Families Program, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block 1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
2. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
3. The disposition of such properties to a developer selected by HPD.

The application for the Urban Development Action Area designation and project approval and disposition of city-owned property was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on June 6, 2007.

Approval of this application would facilitate the development of a seven-story, mixed-use building, with 55 residential units, commercial and community facility space.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development states in its application that:

The Project Area consists of underutilized vacant property that tends to impair or arrest the sound development of the surrounding community, with or without tangible physical blight. Incentives are needed in order to induce the correction of these substandard, insanitary, and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would promote sound growth and development. The Project Area is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area and the proposed project is therefore eligible to be an Urban Development Action Area Project pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking approval of an Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property to facilitate the development of Colon Plaza. The proposed project is located in East Harlem, Manhattan Community District 11.

The site is situated on the north side of East 115th Street between Madison and Park avenues. Located within R7-2 and R7-2/C1-4 zoning districts, the site comprises three city-owned lots (Block 1621, Lots 23, 24 and 25) with an area of approximately 12,363 square feet. Lot 23 is used as a community garden that has operated at this location since 1992. Lot 24 is developed with a one-story building, within which Community Board 11 has its district office and Lot 25 is used for parking. The remainder of the block is developed with residential buildings and community facility uses, with mixed residential/commercial buildings found along the block's East 116th Street frontage.

The site comprises portions of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle-East Urban Renewal Area. Sites 3A and 3B are designated for residential and/or commercial use.

Accordingly, the proposed project is consistent with the urban renewal plan.

The surrounding area is primarily residential in character, with a mix of mid- and high-rise residential buildings, community facilities and local retail uses. Facing the site to the south is the Robert A. Taft Houses, a New York City Housing Authority complex of nine 19-story towers. In recent years, new residential construction has taken place along Madison and Fifth avenues north of East 116th Street, as well as along portions of East and West 116th Street. Recent development includes the Tony Mendez Apartments (130 units), located at East 116th Street and Madison Avenue- Fifth Avenue Homes (120 units) and the Madison Avenue Homeownership Cluster (500 units) both of which are located along portions of Fifth and Madison avenues, between East 117th and East 119th streets. Local retail and service uses are found along East 116th Street, which serves as the area's primary commercial corridor.

The area is well served by mass transit, with subway service provided by the IRT No. 6 line at Lexington Avenue and East 116th Street. Bus service is available on all major avenues and along East 116th Street.

The requested actions would facilitate the development of a seven-story mixed-use building with 55 residential units, 2,448 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 2,551 square feet of community facility space. The project would be funded through the Homes for Working Families (HWF) Program, a program initiated by the New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to finance affordable housing for low-income families and seniors. Under this program, HWF-assisted units are provided to households at or below 60 percent of area median income (approximately \$43,000). Additionally, the proposed project would provide new space for Community Board 11's district office.

The project would be built under the Quality Housing Program. On-site amenities would include 3,300 square feet of landscaped open space, indoor recreation space and laundry facilities. Seven street trees would be planted to improve the project's periphery and adjoining streetscape.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 070513 HAM) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq. and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 07HPD018M. The lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

After a study of the potential impact of the proposed actions, a Negative Declaration was issued on April 11, 2007.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 070513 HAM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on June 18, 2007, and was duly referred to Community Board 11 and the Manhattan Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 11 held a public hearing on this application on June 19, 2007, and on that date, by a vote of 37 to 0 with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Manhattan Borough President who issued a recommendation approving the application on August 15, 2007.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On August 8, 2007, (Calendar No. 6), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 22, 2007 for a public hearing on this application (C 070513 HAM). The hearing was duly held on August 22, 2007 (Calendar No. 30). There were five speakers in favor and none in opposition.

Those speaking in favor included a representative from HPD, who apprised the Commission of HPD's housing affordability policy, programmatic framework and income mix for this project. The representative further stated that Community District 11 residents would have first preference in the tenant selection process and that HPD was working with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to find temporary relocation space for Community Board 11's district offices and a site for the community garden. The developer described the proposed build program. The Executive Director of the 116th Street Block Association, a representative of the Borough President's office and the project architect also appeared in support.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project (UDAAP), and disposition of city-owned property are appropriate. The requested actions would facilitate the development of Colon Plaza, a new low-income rental project to be developed under the New York State Homes for Working Families Program.

The site is located on the north side of East 115th Street between Madison and Park avenues. It contains three city-owned properties (Block 1621, Lots 23, 24 and 25) that total approximately 12,300 square feet. Lot 23 has a community garden; Lot 24 has a one-story building with Community Board 11's district office and Lot 25 has a parking lot. The site comprises portions of

Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Plan. Both sites are designated for mixed residential/commercial use; accordingly, the proposed project complies with the urban renewal plan.

This application would facilitate the development of a seven-story mixed-use building, with 55 rental units that would be made available to families making no more than 60 percent of AMI (approximately \$43,000). The project would also have ground floor commercial and community facility space, and 3,300 square feet of landscaped open space. Moreover, the proposed project would provide new space for Community Board 11's district office.

The Commission believes that this application would facilitate the development of new affordable housing for East Harlem residents. The project complements ongoing public and private redevelopment efforts on neighboring blocks and underscores the city's commitment to redevelop Harlem. The Commission, therefore, believes that the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project (UDAAP), disposition of city-owned property are appropriate.

RESOLUTION

The City Planning Commission finds that the proposed designation of city-owned property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block 1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, conforms to the objectives of the Milbank Frawley Circle-East Urban Renewal Plan (C 920139 HUM), approved on August 19, 1992, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block

1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, as an Urban Development Action Area; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has also recommended the approval of an Urban Development Action Area Project for such properties;

THEREFORE, be it further **RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission, after due consideration of the appropriateness of the actions, certifies its unqualified approval of the following matters pursuant to the Urban Development Action Area Act:

- a) the designation of property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block 1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b) an Urban development Action Area Project for such areas; and

the City Planning Commission recommends that the New York City Council find that:

- a) The present status of the area tends to impair or arrest sound development of the municipality;
- b) The financial aid in the form of tax incentives to be provided by the municipality pursuant to Section 696 of the Urban development Action Area Act, is necessary to enable the project to be undertaken;
- c) The project is consistent with the policy and purposes stated in the Section 691 of the Urban Development Action Area Act, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, for the disposition of city-owned property located at 1753 Madison Avenue, 55 and 57 East 115th Street (Block 1621, Lots 23-25), part of Sites 3A and 3B within the Milbank Frawley Circle East Urban Renewal Area, in Community District 11, Borough of Manhattan, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 070513 HAM).

The above resolution (C 070513 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 5, 2007 (Calendar No.12), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP, Chair
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