



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 25, 2007/Calendar No. 7

C 070283 HUM

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) pursuant to Section 505 of Article 15 of the General Municipal (Urban Renewal) Law of New York State and Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the 1st amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan for the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 10.

The application for the proposed amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on January 9, 2007. The requested action, in conjunction with the related action, would facilitate the development of a six-story building, tentatively known as the West 128th Street Apartments, with approximately 27 residential units within the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area. The proposed plan eliminates the restriction on Site 2 to permit residential development and changes the language and format of the Urban Renewal Plan to reflect the current standard form.

RELATED ACTION

In addition to the proposed amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan, which is the subject of this report, implementation of the proposed development also requires action by the City Planning Commission on the following application which is being considered concurrently with this application:

C 070284 HAM: UDAAP Designation and Project approval, and disposition of city-owned property.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking approval of an amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan, in conjunction with the related action, to facilitate the development of a six-story residential building in the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area.

The Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area was approved by the Board of Estimate on August 18, 1983. The proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project (UDAAP) site, Site 2 of the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan, is located on the north side of West 128th Street between Lenox and Fifth avenues.

This is the first amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan. Originally, Site 2 was designated as parking/and or open space for Site 1, which was developed as an independent living center for the chronically mentally ill.

In order to develop this project, HPD seeks approval of two actions: an amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan and the approval of an UDAAP and related disposition of city-owned property.

AREA AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site is comprised of four city-owned properties (Block 1726; Lots 24, 124, 25 and 26). All of the lots are vacant. There are residential uses that abut the proposed project site to the east and to the west. The predominant uses in the area are residential with commercial uses along Lenox Avenue. The project site is served by the 2 and 3 subway lines, which stop at West 125th Street and Lenox Avenue. There are several bus lines, M60, M100, M101 and the Bx15 that

traverse 125th Street.

This proposed amended plan changes the land use designation on Site 2 to permit residential development and changes the language and format of the Urban Renewal Plan to reflect the current standard form. Site 2 is situated within an R7-2 zoning district and has an area of approximately 6,997 square feet.

In addition to the proposed amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan (C 070283 HUM), HPD is also seeking approval of the related application (C 070284 HAM) for an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP) designation, project approval, and disposition of four city-owned properties (Block 1726; Lots 24, 124, 25, and 26). This will facilitate the development of a six-story building, tentatively known as the West 128th Street Apartments, with 27 residential units, and approximately 330 square feet of landscaped open space. The proposed building will also be developed under the Quality Housing Program.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 070283 HUM), in conjunction with the application for the related action (C 070284 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 lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

This application was determined to be a Type II action which requires no further environmental review.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 070283 HUM), in conjunction with the application for the related action (C 070284 HAM), was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on January 22, 2007, and was duly referred to Community Board 10 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 10 held a public hearing on this application on March 7, 2007, and on that date, by a vote of 28 to 2 with 1 abstention, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application with the following conditions:

- The developer use locally based marketing groups;
- The developer conduct marketing seminars within CB 10;
- The developer utilize locally based professionals (engineers, landscape architects, construction managers, general contractors, subcontractors, other buildings trade professionals);
- The developer ensures that the preponderance of persons hired for construction and related jobs reside in the zip codes that Community Board #10 covers (including the establishment of training programs for local residents if necessary);
- The developer be responsible for sanitation/health concerns of the site (snow/ice removal, weekly lot cleaning, rodent baiting, fence repairing);
- The building must be of uniform signage;
- The roof top mechanicals be enclosed within the esthetically pleasing structure;

- The commercial spaces be sized and priced to accommodate small and local based entrepreneurs;
- The gating inside the commercial spaces be “see through”;
- The owners have a meaningful collective voice in the commercial tenant selection; and
- That external, esthetically-pleasing lighting be installed on the perimeter.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Manhattan Borough President who issued a recommendation approving the application on April 4, 2007.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On March 28, 2007 (Calendar No. 9), the City Planning Commission scheduled April 11, 2007 for a public hearing on this application (C 070283 HUM). The hearing was duly held on April 11, 2007 (Calendar No. 30), in conjunction with the public hearing on the application for the related action (C 070284 HAM). There were four speakers in favor and one in opposition.

The Director of Land Use for the Borough President’s office restated the Borough President’s recommendation for approval of this project. A representative from the West Harlem Group Assistance (WHGA) also spoke in favor of the project. He talked about how the proposed project satisfies the affordable housing needs for this community and WHGA partnership with Phipps Housing Group. Additionally, he stated with this project his organization will be able to create additional units of transitional housing for families that were formerly homeless within this community district and that his organization was committed to preserving and providing affordable housing.

A representative from HPD spoke in favor of the proposed project. She described why the amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan was needed to facilitate the proposed development and HPD's guidelines for community district preference for housing.

The architect described the project and the building materials that they are proposing to use and the amenities associated with the proposed project such as the open space and the ground floor laundry facility.

There was one speaker from the Harlem Platform Committee who spoke in opposition of the proposed project. She stated that the proposed project did not meet direct needs of the residents in Harlem Community District 10. She also stated that the proposed project lacks homeownership opportunities, and the project does not respond to the need for family housing.

There were no other speakers on the application and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the proposed amendment to the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan, in conjunction with the related action, is appropriate.

The proposed amended urban renewal plan would eliminate the restriction on Site 2 to facilitate the development of a six-story building with approximately 27 residential units.

The Commission notes that the elimination of the restriction on Site 2 will further increase the housing opportunities within this community. The removal of this restriction would facilitate the development of affordable rental units on vacant land.

The Commission notes that the proposed project provides affordable housing opportunities for

the resident of this community. Additionally, the proposed project will contribute to the on-going revitalization of this community.

This application would facilitate the development of a six-story building with approximately 27 residential units and approximately 330 square feet of landscaped open space. Approval of this application would return these lots to private ownership and eliminate the blighting influence of vacant lots on the block.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the amended Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Plan is an appropriate plan for the area involved; and

The City Planning Commission certifies that the amended urban renewal plan for the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area complies with provisions of Section 502, Article 15 of the General Municipal Law of New York State, conforms to the comprehensive community plan for the development of the municipality as a whole and is consistent with local objectives; and

The City Planning Commission further certifies that the amended Urban Renewal Plan for the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area is in conformity with the findings and designation of the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area as adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 13, 1983. The Commission certifies its unqualified approval of the amended Urban Renewal Plan for the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area, pursuant to Section 505, Article 15 of the General Municipal Law of New York State; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, Section 505, Article 15 of the General Municipal Law of New York State, and after due consideration of the appropriateness of this action, that the amended Urban Renewal Plan for the Central Harlem East Urban Renewal Area, Community District 10, Borough of Manhattan, submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on January 9, 2007, is approved(C 070283 HUM).

The above resolution (C 070283 HUM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on April 11, 2007 (Calendar No. 7), 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
KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., Vice Chairman

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