



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 23, 2003/Calendar No. 33

C 030316 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:
 - 1) the designation of 459 W. 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - 2) 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 rehabilitation of an existing building for use as a community facility, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 9.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

- 1) The designation of 459 W. 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36), as an Urban Development Action Area;
- 2) An Urban Development Action Area Project for such property; and
- 3) The disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD.

The subject application was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) on February 20, 2003. Approval of this application would facilitate the renovation of an existing four-story, vacant city-owned building, for use as a community facility.

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

The project area consists of a vacant building, which 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 those

substandard, insanitary and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would promote sound growth and development. The Disposition 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) seeks approval of an Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property to facilitate the development of an environmental education center at 459 West 140th Street. The project site is located one block south of the Hamilton Heights Historic District in Manhattan, Community District 9.

The proposed education center would be owned and operated by West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT). WE ACT is a nonprofit community-based organization that educates and informs Northern Manhattan residents on environmental issues. WE ACT also serves as an environmental advocate on such issues. The proposed action would enable WE ACT to relocate from its present location at 271 West 125th Street, to establish a larger Environmental Justice Resource Center. The center would house WE ACT's administrative offices, an environmental resource library, and also have conference and training spaces.

The project site, 459 West 140th Street, is located on the north side of West 140th Street between Convent and Amsterdam avenues. The site is located in an R7-2 zoning district, which allows residential uses up to 3.44 FAR and community facility uses up to 6.5 FAR. The subject

property comprises a vacant four-story brownstone (Block 2057, Lot 36) that has 5,287 square feet of floor area (2.9 FAR). After securing ownership, WE ACT would renovate the subject property for its use. In addition to the aforementioned conference and training spaces, the project would also provide a new elevator, to be installed in the rear of the building, to facilitate access between the first and second floors.

The project site abuts occupied residential buildings on all sides. The block adjoins the Hamilton Heights Historic District, which is developed with architecturally and historically significant residential and community facility buildings. City College's Shepherd Hall, St. Luke's Church and Hamilton Grange, which are city landmarks, are located one block east. The site is well served by public transportation, with bus service available at Convent and Amsterdam avenues, which are located within a one-block radius of the project site. IND subway service is available at St. Nicholas Avenue and West 145th Street, located five blocks to the north.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 030316 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 030316 HAM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on March 3, 2003, and was duly referred to Community Board 9 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 9 held a public hearing on this application on April 16, 2003, and on that date, by a vote of 25 to 0 with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on May 23, 2003, approving the application.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On June 4, 2003 (Calendar No.12), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 18, 2003 for a public hearing on this application (C 030316 HAM). The hearing was duly held on June 18, 2003 (Calendar No.16).

There were no speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

The Commission believes that the application for the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property, is appropriate.

The proposed action would facilitate the development of an environmental justice and educational center for West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc. (WE ACT), a northern Manhattan-based environmental advocacy organization. WE ACT educates Harlem residents on environmental issues and serves as a community advocate on such issues.

The subject property, 459 West 140th Street, is located on the north side of West 140th Street between Convent and Amsterdam avenues in Hamilton Heights. The property is located one block south of the Hamilton Heights Historic District, which features architecturally significant residential and ecclesiastical structures. The subject property comprises a vacant, city-owned four-story brownstone that would be renovated into a modern environmental educational center, with training and conference room spaces. Additionally, the center would have an elevator to facilitate access and interior movement between the first and second floors.

The Commission notes that the proposed action would enable WE ACT to relocate from their offices at 271 West 125th Street, to larger quarters. Moreover, the proposed action would renovate a vacant city-owned building, bringing it into productive, active use. The Commission,

therefore, believes that the application for the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property, is appropriate.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of 459 W. 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36) in Community District 9, Borough of Manhattan, 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 property;

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 459 W. 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36) in Community District 9, Borough of Manhattan, as an Urban Development Action Area; and
- b) an Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; 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 the 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; and
- c) The project is consistent with the policy and purposes stated in 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 459 W. 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36), in Community District 9, Borough of Manhattan, to facilitate rehabilitation of an existing building for use as a community facility, is approved (C 030316 HAM).

The above resolution (C 030316 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 23, 2003 (Calendar No. 33), 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**
ANGELA M. BATTAGLIA, IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,
ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A., RICHARD W. EADDY,
ALEXANDER GARVIN, JANE D. GOL, CHRISTOPHER KUI,
JOHN MEROLO, KAREN B. PHILLIPS,
JOSEPH B. ROSE, DOLLY WILLIAMS, **Commissioners**

**CB9M**565 West 125 Street
New York, New York 10027
(212) 864-6200/Fax # 662-7396**COMMUNITY BOARD #9, MANHATTAN**C. Virginia Fields
President, Borough of Manhattan

April 21, 2003

George Goodwill
ChairCarolyn R. Thompson
First Vice-ChairMaritta Dunn
Second Vice-ChairTheodore Kovaleff
SecretaryRamona Jennett
Assistant SecretaryCarlotta Damanda
TreasurerBarbara Marshall
Assistant TreasurerLawrence T. McClean
District ManagerMs. Miriam Gonzalez
Project Manager
H.P.D. - Manhattan Planning Office
105 East 106th Street, 4th fl.
New York, New York 10029**Re: ULURP Application #030316HAM**

Dear Ms. Gonzalez:

At its General Board Meeting held on Wednesday, April 16, 2003 the Community Board reviewed the recommendation of our Quorum Committee on the disposition of 459 West 140th Street. The Committee on April 15, 2003 vote 8-0-0 to approve the property being given to the Environmental Justice Center.

Manhattan Community Board No. 9 voted to approve the recommendations by a vote of 25 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, of a Board total of 45 members, that the application be approved.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself of District Manager Lawrence McClean at (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Thompson
1st Vice-Chaircc: Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Peggy Shepard, WEACT
Edwin Marshall, City Planning Commission
Hon. George Goodwill, Chair, CB#9
Hon. Robert Jackson, City Council Member
Hon. Jordi Reyes Montblanc, Co-Chair, Housing/Land Use Committee



Edwin
Manhattan
Office

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

C. VIRGINIA FIELDS
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
2003 MAY 23 PM 5:00
DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

May 23, 2003

RECEIVED

JUN - 4 2003

MANHATTAN OFFICE

ULURP NO.

C 030316-HAM

APPLICANT

Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
100 Gold Street
New York, New York 10038

REQUEST

This application is being submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for the designation of 459 West 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36) as an Urban Development Action Area; an Urban Development Action Project for such area; and, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD to facilitate the rehabilitation of an existing building for use as a community facility.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is seeking approval of an Urban Development Action Area and Project (UDAAP), and disposition of City-Owned-Property to facilitate the rehabilitation and a negotiated sale of the City-owned property.

West Harlem Environmental Action (WHE ACT), a community-based not-for-profit organization, will develop and establish an Environmental Justice Resource Center that will serve as a community

facility devoted to issues of environmental health and quality in Northern Manhattan. WHE ACT will inform, educate and mobilize residents in their community around environmental issues important to the community. The proposed project consists of the rehabilitation of one four-story brownstone building that is currently vacant.

In addition to housing the group's offices, the center will have a conference facility, an environmental resource library and a training center for an environmental youth leadership project. Twenty-five percent of the center's floor area will be used for WHE ACT's office space.

The site has an area of approximately 1,799 sq. ft. and is zoned R7-2. It is located on the block bounded on the west by Amsterdam Avenue, on the east by Convent Avenue, on the south by West 140th Street and on the north by West 141st Street.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY BOARD ACTION

On April 16, 2003 Community Board 9 held a public hearing to review this application and on the same date voted unanimously 25 in favor, 0 against with 0 abstentions to approve this proposal.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT ACTION

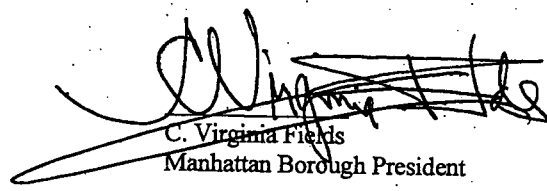
- The Manhattan Borough President recommends approval.
- The Manhattan Borough President recommends disapproval.
- The Manhattan Borough President recommends approval, subject to the conditions detailed below.
- The Manhattan Borough President recommends disapproval, unless the conditions detailed below are addressed as described.

COMMENTS

Noting the unanimous approval of Community Board 9, the Borough President supports the designation of 459 West 140th Street as an Urban Development Action Area and its designation as an Urban Development Action Area Project. Moreover, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter the Borough President supports the disposition of such property to a developer selected by HPD to facilitate the rehabilitation and development of an Environmental Justice Center.

The Manhattan Borough President therefore recommends approval of this application.

Report and Recommendation
Accepted:



C. Virginia Fields
Manhattan Borough President

**Borough President
Recommendation**

City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
Fax # (212) 720-3356

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representative as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

Application #: C 030316 HAM

Docket Description:

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 459 West 140th Street (Block 2057, Lot 36), as an Urban Development Action Area; and
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to facilitate rehabilitation of an existing building for use as a community facility.

COMMUNITY BOARD NO.: 9

BOROUGH: Manhattan

RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS (List below)
- DISAPPROVE
- DISAPPROVE UNLESS CONDITIONS ARE SATISFIED

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
2003 MAY 23 PM 5:00
DEPT. OF CITY PLANNING

EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION - MODIFICATION/CONDITIONS (Attach additional sheets if necessary)


BOROUGH PRESIDENT

5/23/03
DATE