



## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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November 14, 2007/Calendar No. 18

C 070105 ZSM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by Roag, Inc. pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the requirements of Section 42-14(D)(2)(b) to allow Use Group 6 uses on portions of the ground floor and cellar of an existing 5-story building and proposed penthouse on property located at 50 Howard Street a.k.a. 16 Mercer (Block 231, Lot 16), in an M1-5B District, within the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District.

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The application for the special permit was filed by Roag, Inc. on September 12, 2006 to allow Use Group 6 (retail) uses on portions of the ground floor and cellar floor of an existing five-story building at 50 Howard Street.

### **BACKGROUND**

50 Howard Street is located on the northeast corner of Howard and Mercer streets within an M1-5B District. The building is within the boundaries of the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.

The five-story structure was built in 1863 as the New York Soldier's Depot. The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has found that the "style, scale, materials, and details of the building are among the features that contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the SoHo/Cast Iron Historic District." The building has lot coverage of 4,351 square feet and is currently vacant.

According to the use regulations for an M1-5B district, uses below the second story are limited to wholesale, business service, warehouse and light industrial uses (Use Groups 7, 9, 11, 16, 13A,

13B, 13C and 13E). Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution allows the City Planning Commission, by special permit, to modify use and bulk regulations (except floor area) in order to further the preservation of designated landmark buildings or buildings located within historic districts.

This application requests a modification of the M1-5B use regulations to allow approximately 3,048 square feet of retail (Use Group 6) use on the ground floor, and 1,439 square feet of retail (Use Group 6) use in the cellar level of 50 Howard Street. A total of 4,487 square feet of retail use is proposed. The application includes a report from the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that a continuing maintenance program has been established that will result in the preservation of 50 Howard Street, and that the proposed use modification contributes to a preservation purpose.

Joint-Live Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQAs) are proposed for the upper floors of the building. In the M1-5B district, JLWQAs are allowed as-of-right on the upper floors of buildings with lot coverage not exceeding 5,000 square feet.

The surrounding SoHo neighborhood is generally developed with five- to twelve-story loft buildings along Broadway and five- and six-story lofts along nearby streets. Along Broadway, many of the upper floors contain offices, art galleries or other commercial uses, while the upper floors of other buildings have been converted to JLWQAs. Ground floor uses in the vicinity consist of a mix of clothing stores and restaurants.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This application (C 070105 ZSM) 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 06DCP097M. The lead is the City Planning Commission.

After a study of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on July 23, 2007.

#### **UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW**

This application (C 070105 ZSM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on July 23, 2007 and was duly referred to Community Board 2 and the Borough President, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

#### **Community Board Public Hearing**

On August 16, 2007, the executive committee of Community Board 2 adopted a resolution approving the application. Because this was not a recommendation adopted by the full community board, it is therefore non-complying.

#### **Borough President Recommendation**

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on September 27, 2007, recommending approval of the application.

### **City Planning Commission Public Hearing**

On October 3, 2007 (Calendar No. 4), the City Planning Commission scheduled October 17, 2007 for a public hearing on this application (C 070105 ZSM). The hearing was duly held on October 17, 2007 (Calendar No. 12). There were two speakers in favor of the application and none in opposition.

The attorney for the project described the subject proposal and stated that it met the requisite findings. A representative of the Borough President reiterated the Borough President's support of the application.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

### **CONSIDERATION**

The Commission believes that the grant of this special permit is appropriate.

When the building was constructed in 1863, and continuing throughout the better part of the last century, the area known as SoHo contained a mix of commercial, warehouse and industrial uses.

However, over the last twenty to twenty-five years many buildings in this area have been converted from manufacturing uses to JLWQAs (Use Group 17D) and Use Group 6 uses occupy much of the ground floor frontages. The Commission recognizes that, as a mixed-use

neighborhood, SoHo supports a broad range of ground floor uses, from retail businesses to those oriented towards the arts. Therefore, the Commission believes that Use Group 6 uses on the ground floor and cellar level will be consistent with established land use trends in the greater SoHo neighborhood.

The proposed use modifications will facilitate the renovation and preservation of 50 Howard Street. The conversion and renovation of this building, to be accomplished as a result of this special permit, will enhance the architectural and historical built fabric of the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District.

## **FINDINGS**

The City Planning Commission hereby makes the following findings pursuant to Section 74-711 (Landmark preservation in all districts) of the Zoning Resolution:

- (1) Not applicable
- (2) such use modifications shall have minimal adverse effects on the conforming uses within the building and in the surrounding area.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

**RESOLVED**, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 200 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination, and the consideration and findings described in this report, the application of Roag, Inc. for the grant of a special permit

pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution to modify the requirements of Section 42-14(D)(2)(b) to allow retail use (Use Group 6 uses) on portions of the ground floor and cellar of an existing 5-story building and proposed penthouse on property located at 50 Howard Street a.k.a. 16 Mercer (Block 231, Lot 16), in an M1-5B District, within the SoHo Cast Iron Historic District, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 2 is approved, subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. The property that is the subject of this application (C 070105 ZSM) shall be developed in size and arrangement substantially in accordance with the dimensions, specifications and zoning computations indicated on the following plan, prepared by Dattner Architects, filed with this application and incorporated in this resolution:

<u>Drawing No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Last Date Revised</u>
CPC-001	Plot Plan & Zoning Information	May 25, 2007
CPC-003	Proposed Floor Plans	May 25, 2007
CPC-004	Proposed Floor Plans	May 25, 2007

2. Such development shall conform to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Resolution, except for the modifications specifically granted in this resolution and shown on the plans listed above which have been filed with this application. All zoning computations are subject to verification and approval by the New York City Department of Buildings.
3. Such development shall conform to all applicable laws and regulations relating to its construction, operation and maintenance.

4. In the event the property that is the subject of the application is developed as, sold as, or converted to condominium units, a homeowners' association, or cooperative ownership, a copy of this resolution and the restrictive declaration described below and any subsequent modifications to either document shall be provided to the Attorney General of the State of New York at the time of application for any such condominium, homeowners' or cooperative offering plan and, if the Attorney General so directs, shall be incorporated in full in any offering documents relating to the property.
  
5. All leases, subleases, or other agreements for use or occupancy of space at the subject property shall give actual notice of this special permit to the lessee, sublessee or occupant.
  
6. Development pursuant to this resolution shall be allowed only after the attached restrictive declaration dated August 8, 2007, executed by Roag, Inc., the terms of which are hereby incorporated in this resolution, shall have been recorded and filed in the Office of the Register of the City of New York, County of New York.
  
7. Upon the failure of any party having any right, title or interest in the property that is the subject of this application, or the failure of any heir, successor, assign, or legal representative of such party, to observe any of the covenants, restrictions, agreements, terms or conditions of this resolution and the attached restrictive declaration whose provisions shall constitute conditions of the special permit hereby granted, the City Planning Commission may, without the consent of any other party, revoke any portion of

or all of said special permit. Such power of revocation shall be in addition to and not limited to any other powers of the City Planning Commission, or of any other agency of government, or any private person or entity. Any such failure as stated above, or any alteration in the development that is the subject of this application that departs from any of the conditions listed above, is grounds for the City Planning Commission or the City Council, as applicable, to disapprove any application for modification, cancellation or amendment of the special permit hereby granted or of the attached restrictive declaration.

8. Neither the City of New York nor its employees or agents shall have any liability for money damages by reason of the city's or such employee's or agent's failure to act in accordance with the provisions of this special permit.

The above resolution (C 070105 ZSM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on November 14, 2007 (Calendar No.18), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President together with a copy of the plans of the development, in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice-Chair

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Commissioners