



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

September 8, 2004/Calendar No. 32

C 040438 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 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112) 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 properties to a developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate the development of a six-story building tentatively known as Odyssey House, with approximately 50 units for low-income persons with mental illness, to be developed under the New York State Office of Mental Health, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots, 9, 10, 110, 11,12 and 112);
2. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such property; and
3. The disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

The application for the Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and disposition of city-owned property was submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on April 29, 2004.

Approval of this application would facilitate construction of a six-story building containing 50 residential units for low-income persons with mental illness. The proposed project is tentatively known as Odyssey House.

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

The Disposition Area consists of underutilized vacant land and a one-story garage which tend 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, unsanitary and blighting conditions. The project activities would protect and promote health and safety and would protect and 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 seeks approval of an Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and the disposition of city-owned property to facilitate the development of a six-story building tentatively known as Odyssey House.

The project site is located on the north side of East 123rd Street between Park and Lexington avenues in East Harlem, Manhattan, Community District 11.

The proposed project site is located within an R7-2 zoning district which allows residential development up to a 3.44 FAR and community facility uses up to 6.5 FAR. The block also has an M1-4 zoning district on the corner of Park Avenue and East 123rd Street that extends 90 feet into the block. The block's Lexington Avenue frontage has a C2-4 commercial overlay that also extends around the corner and fully covers the block's East 124th Street frontage.

The project site is located within the midblock of East 123rd Street between Park and Lexington avenues. The site comprises six (6) city-owned properties (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12, 112) that total approximately 10,011 square feet. A vacant one-story garage, which is located on Lot 9, will be demolished for this project. The project site is designated as Site 4C in the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Plan. Site 4C is designated for residential use and the proposed project complies with the urban renewal plan.

The proposed project site is located on a block that consists primarily of vacant land on its East 123rd Street frontage. Along Lexington Avenue, the block has some ground floor retail and commercial uses while East 124th Street has a mix of vacant land, industrial, commercial and residential uses.

The surrounding area is primarily residential in character. New residential development in the area includes Maple Plaza and Maple Court, which comprise two 150-unit co-op developments located at Madison Avenue and East 123rd Street, one block west of the site. Four New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments are located south of the proposed project site: Martin Luther King Jr. Towers, Robert A. Taft Houses, James W. Johnson Houses and the Jefferson Houses. To the east of the site, are two housing developments, Taino Towers and the NYCHA-managed the Robert F. Wagner Houses. To the north of the site, is East 125th Street which has undergone significant economic redevelopment.

The requested actions would facilitate the development of the proposed Odyssey House project, which will be built under the New York State Office of Mental Hygiene and funded through a Program Development Grant (PDG). The proposed project consists of one six-story building which would provide 50 units for persons who have completed treatment for mental illness.

The proposed project would also provide supportive services to the residents. Proposed amenities include a laundry room, security guard station and approximately 5,308 square feet of open space at the rear of the building. The site's perimeter will be landscaped with shrubbery and trees.

The site is well served by public transportation, with bus service along major avenues. Subway service is provided at East 125th Street and Lexington Avenue by the Nos. 4,5 and 6 lines.

Convenience shopping is along East 125th Street and along Lexington Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 040438 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 for Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 Of 1977. The lead agency is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. The designated CEQR number is 03 HPD002M.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a Negative declaration was issued on November 8, 2002.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 040438 HAM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on May 10, 2004, and was duly referred to Community Board 11 and the Borough President, in accordance with Article 3 of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) rules.

Community Board Public Hearing

Community Board 11 held a public hearing on this application on June 15, 2004, and on that date, by a vote of 21 to 8 with 1 abstention, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation approving the application on June 29, 2004.

City Planning Commission Public Hearing

On July 28, 2004 (Calendar No. 10), the City Planning Commission scheduled August 11, 2004, for a public hearing on this application (C 040438 HAM). The hearing was duly held on August 11, 2004 (Calendar No. 15). There were four speakers in favor of the application, and no speakers in opposition to the project.

Those speaking in favor, included two representatives from Odyssey House, the architect and a representative from the New York State Office of Mental Health. The representative of the sponsor mentioned that all hospitals in the immediate area support the proposed project and did not think that the proposed project would make service delivery a burden. He also explained that the sponsor would hire fifteen full-time employees and that they would hire from the surrounding area; they presently employ 200 workers, in total, for their other three facilities. He further stated that there are three other special needs housing sites in this community. He also stated that Odyssey House has brought stability to the blocks where their facilities are located.

The President of Odyssey House explained that the proposed project would not be a drug treatment facility and that the average stay would be five to six years. The project architect briefly described the proposed build program and the representative from the New York State Office of Mental Health was present to answer questions.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

CONSIDERATION

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

The proposed project, Odyssey House, would be located on the north side of East 123rd Street between Park and Lexington avenues. Situated within an R7-2 zoning district, the project site

consists of six city-owned properties (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112) of which, Lot 9, occupied by a vacant garage, will be demolished. The site is also designated as Site 4C in the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Plan. Site 4C is designated for residential use and the proposed project complies with the urban renewal plan.

The proposed project is a six-story building that will be developed under the New York State Office of Mental Health. It would provide 50 residential units for low-income persons who have completed treatment for mental illness problems. The proposed project would also provide supportive services to the residents.

The Commission believes that the proposed project would provide necessary housing for persons who have been treated for mental illness problems. Further, the project would develop vacant city-owned property, returning it to active, productive use. The Commission therefore believes that the proposed application, for the proposed Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and related disposition of city-owned property, is appropriate.

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the proposed disposition of city-owned property, located at 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112) conforms to the objectives and provisions of the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Plan, (C 920660 HUM), approved on March 10, 1993, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will not have a significant impact on the environment,

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112), in Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11 as an Urban Development Action Area; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Housing Preservation and Development has 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 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112), 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 113, 115 and 121-127 East 123rd Street (Site 4C) within the Upper Park Avenue Urban Renewal Area (Block 1772, Lots 9, 10, 110, 11, 12 and 112), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 11, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 040438 HAM).

The above resolution (C 040438 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 8, 2004 (Calendar No. 32), 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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