



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 19, 2005/Calendar No. 27

C 050460 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 115, 117 and 119 West 137th Street (Block 2006, Lots 20, 121 and 22) 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 sponsor to be determined by HPD;

to facilitate the development of two buildings, tentatively known as the Lenox Powell Apartments, with approximately 37 residential units, to be developed under HPD's Vacant Building Program, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 10.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of property located at 115, 117 and 119 West 137th Street (Block 2006, Lots 20, 121 and 22), as an Urban Development Action Area;
2. An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
3. The disposition of such property to a sponsor to be determined by 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 May 12, 2005.

Approval of this application would facilitate construction of two residential buildings with 37 affordable housing units.

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

The project area consists of underutilized properties that 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, 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) seeks approval of an Urban Development Action Area designation and project, and related disposition of city-owned property. The application would facilitate the development of affordable housing on vacant city-owned property located on the north side of West 137th Street between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. boulevards. The site includes two vacant buildings (Block 2006, Lots 20 and 22) and a vacant lot (Block 2006, Lot 121). Located in an R7-2 zoning district, the site has 8,750 square feet of lot area, of which 2,500 square feet comprises vacant land. All three properties are city-owned. The site is adjoined by occupied five and six-story residential buildings, and vacant land.

The project has 37 affordable housing units in two buildings with separate entrances. The first building, 115-117 West 137th Street, consists of an existing vacant six-story walk-up (Block 2006, Lot 22) that would be renovated and combined with a new five-story building to be built under Quality Housing, on the adjoining vacant lot, Block 2006, Lot 121. The combined building would have 27 units and provide a common lobby, cellar and elevator. The second

building, 119 West 137th Street, is a vacant, five-story walk-up that would be renovated with 10 affordable units. Both buildings would have a separate rooftop open space but share a common rear yard having 3,125 square feet of landscaped open space. Further, the project would provide a laundry room and community room for each building and street trees to improve the surrounding streetscape.

The project would provide rental housing for low and moderate-income families. Moreover, of the 37 units proposed by the sponsor, 15 percent (i.e., five to six units) would be made available to the elderly. The project sponsor, in conjunction with local community organizations, would provide support services to the elderly residents.

The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly residential in character, typified by 3-4 story row houses and 4-5 story multiple dwellings. Moreover, the area has several churches, schools and community facilities. Mother AME Zion Church and Abyssinian Baptist Church, designated city landmarks, are located on West 137th and West 138th streets, respectively, between Malcolm X and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. boulevards. Ground floor retail activity can be found along Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Malcolm X boulevards, and along West 135th Street. The surrounding neighborhood has seen significant capital and entrepreneurial efforts. Recent development includes Thurgood Marshall Academy, a new middle/ high school serving 350 students, located at West 135th Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard. Striver's Gardens, a 170-unit affordable condominium development, is located at Frederick Douglass Boulevard and West 135th Street, one block west of the project site.

The neighborhood is well served by mass transit, with subway access provided at West 135th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue by the IND Sixth and Eighth Avenue lines, and at Malcolm X Boulevard and West 135th Street by the Seventh Avenue IRT lines (numbers 2 and 3 lines). Bus service is also available on all major streets. Local shopping can be found along West 135th Street and along Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Malcolm X boulevards.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 050460 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.

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

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C 050460 HAM) was certified as complete on May 23, 2005, 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 May 17, 2005, and on that date, by a vote of 29 to 4 with 1 abstention, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application with conditions. However, the community board's public hearing was held before the application was certified.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on August 10, 2005 approving the application.

CITY PLANNING PUBLIC HEARING

On August 24, 2005, (Calendar No. 4), the City Planning Commission scheduled September 14, 2005 for the public hearing on this application (C 050460 HAM). The hearing was duly held on September 14, 2005 (Calendar No. 23). There were two speakers in favor of this application and none in opposition.

Speaking in favor was the project sponsor who described the project's overall build program and housing affordability framework. The second speaker, a representative from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, appeared in support of the application.

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 project would provide 37 affordable housing units in two buildings. The first building, 115-117 West 137th Street, consists of an existing vacant six-story walk-up (Block 2006, Lot 22) that would be renovated and combined with a new five-story building to be built under Quality Housing, on the adjoining vacant lot, Block 2006, Lot 121. The combined building would have 27 units and provide a common lobby, cellar and elevator. The second building, 119 West 137th Street, is a vacant, five-story walk-up that would be renovated with 10 affordable units. Both buildings would have a separate rooftop open space but share a common rear yard having 3,125 square feet of landscaped open space. Further, the project would provide a laundry room and community room for each building and street trees to improve the surrounding streetscape.

The project would provide rental housing for low and moderate-income families. Of the 37 units proposed by the sponsor, 15 percent (i.e., five to six units) would be made available to the elderly. The project sponsor, in conjunction with local community organizations, would provide support services to the elderly residents.

The Commission believes the proposed project would provide new affordable housing for Harlem residents, especially for the elderly. 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), and related disposition of city-owned property are appropriate.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development has recommended the designation of property located at 115, 117 and 119 West 137th Street (Block 2006, Lots 20, 121 and 22) in Community District 10, 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 property located at 115, 117 and 119 West 137th Street (Block 2006, Lots 20, 121 and 22), 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 115, 117 and 119 West 137th Street (Block 2006, Lots 20, 121 and 22), Community District 10, Borough of Manhattan, to a sponsor to be determined by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 050460 HAM).

The above resolution (C 050460 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on October 19, 2005 (Calendar No. 27) 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, ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A.,
IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E. ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,
RICHARD W. EADDY, LISA A. GOMEZ, JOHN MEROLO,
KAREN A. PHILLIPS, DOLLY WILLIAMS, **Commissioners**