



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 13, 2005/Calendar No. 18

C 050204 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 350, 352, 354 and 356 West 124th Street (Block 1950, Lots 57-60), 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 developer selected by HPD;

to facilitate development of a seven-story building tentatively known as Hancock Place, with approximately 53 units of low income housing, to be developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 9.

Approval of three separate matters is required:

1. The designation of property located at 350, 352, 354 and 356 (Block 1950 Lots 57-60), 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 developer selected 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 December 10, 2004.

Approval of this application would facilitate construction of a seven-story residential building containing 53 low-income units. The proposed project is tentatively known as Hancock Place Apartments.

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

The disposition area consists of underutilized vacant land 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 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 as 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 related disposition of city-owned property to facilitate development of the Hancock Place Apartments, a proposed 53-unit, low-income rental project to be built developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program. The project site is located in Manhattan Community District 9.

Under the Housing Trust Fund Program, sponsors selected by the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTF) purchase and rehabilitate vacant city-owned buildings or purchase vacant city-owned land to facilitate construction of new residential buildings. HTF provides construction and permanent financing. Upon completion, the rehabilitated or newly constructed

buildings would provide rental or limited equity cooperative housing for low income and homeless families.

The proposed housing site, 350- 356 West 124th Street, is located on the south side of West 124th Street between Morningside and Manhattan avenues. The site comprises four city-owned vacant lots (Block 1950, Lots 57, 58, 59 and 60) that total 11,247 square feet. It was recently rezoned from R7-2 and R8 (3.44 and 6.02 FAR, respectively) to R8A and C4-4D (6.02 residential FAR, 3.44 commercial FAR), as part of the Frederick Douglass Boulevard rezoning (C 030436 ZMM), which was approved by the City Council on November 6, 2003. The proposed seven-story building would have 48,829 square feet of floor area and would be built at 4.34 FAR.

In addition to 53 low income rental units, one unit for a building superintendent would be provided. The project would have community and laundry rooms, and also provide 4,163 square feet of landscaped open space to be placed in the rear of the building. Further, new street trees would be planted to improve the adjoining streetscape.

Along West 124th Street, the proposed housing site abuts a former firehouse that is currently used as a community facility for local nonprofit theater activity. The block is typified by three-story brownstones which face West 123rd Street. Manny Wilson Towers, a 14-story seniors' residence that occupies the former Sydenham Hospital building, anchors the block's eastern end. The neighborhood has a mix of three, four and five-story residential buildings, community facilities and scattered vacant lots. The project site is served by several local bus routes that run along

West 125th Street, St. Nicholas Avenue and Frederick Douglass Boulevard. Subway service is provided at West 125th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue by the IND 6th and 8th Avenue lines. Local convenience shopping is primarily available along West 125th Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C 050204 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 050204 HAM) was certified as complete on January 3, 2005, 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 January 20, 2005 and on that date, by a vote of 24 in favor, 0 opposed and 3 abstentions adopted a resolution recommending the approval of the application.

Borough President Recommendation

This application was considered by the Borough President, who issued a recommendation on February 8, 2005 approving the application with the following condition:

The Borough President supports the development of affordable housing on this site and recommends that the developers make a best effort to hire MWBE contractors and professionals.

CITY PLANNING PUBLIC HEARING

On March 2, 2005, (Calendar No. 3), the City Planning Commission scheduled March 16, 2005 for the public hearing on this application (C 050204 HAM). The hearing was duly held on March 16, 2005 (Calendar No. 36). There was one speaker in favor of this application and none in opposition.

Speaking in favor was the project's architect, who presented the project in detail, describing the project's programmatic requirements, proposed massing and site plans.

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 proposed actions would facilitate the development of the Hancock Place Apartments, a new seven-story residential building to be developed under the New York State Housing Trust Fund Program.

The project site is located on the south side of West 124th Street between Morningside and Manhattan avenues in Harlem. Located in C4-4D and R8A districts, the site includes four city-owned vacant lots (Block 1950, Lots 57-60) totaling 11,247 square feet.

The project would provide 53 units of low income housing and 4,163 square feet of landscaped open space. Additionally, new street trees would be planted to improve the surrounding streetscape.

The Commission notes that the project site is included in the Frederick Douglass Boulevard rezoning area (C 030436 ZMM), a recently approved, Department-sponsored rezoning initiative. The project site, rezoned from R7-2 (3.44 FAR) and R8 (6.02 FAR) to C4-4D and R8A (6.02 FAR), is the second new residential development to benefit from the Department's rezoning for the area.

The Commission believes the proposed project would provide new affordable housing for low income families in Harlem. 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 350, 352, 354 and 356 West 124th Street (Block 1950, Lots 57-60) 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 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 350, 352, 354 and 356 West 124th Street (Block 1950, Lots 57-60), 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 350, 352, 354 and 356 West 124th Street (Block 1950, Lots 57-60), Community District 9, Borough of Manhattan, to a developer to be selected by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, is approved (C 050204 HAM).

The above resolution (C 050204 HAM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on April 13, 2005 (Calendar No. 18) 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,
ANGELA R. CAVALUZZI, R.A., ALFRED C. CERULLO, III,
RICHARD W. EADDY, JANE D. GOL, LISA GOMEZ,
CHRISTOPHER KUI, JOHN MEROLO,
KAREN A. PHILLIPS, DOLLY WILLIAMS, **Commissioners**