



**Community Board 12 - Manhattan  
Washington Heights & Inwood**

530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

May 24, 2016

Hon. Carl Weisbrod, Chairman  
NYC Planning Commission  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10271

**RE: Resolution offering no objection to the revised ULURP Application for Sherman Plaza -  
Application No.: C 150438ZMM, 4650 Broadway, NY, NY, Block 2175/Lot1**

Dear Chairman Weisbrod:

At the General Meeting of Community Board 12- Manhattan held on Tuesday, May 24, 2016, the Board passed the following resolution offering no objection to the revised ULURP Application for Sherman Plaza -- Application No: C 150438ZMM, 4650 Broadway, New York, New York, Block 2175/Lot1, with a vote of (26) In Favor; (4) Opposed;(0) Abstaining.

**Whereas:** On March 22, 2016 Community Board 12- Manhattan ("CB12M") passed a resolution opposing the residential rezoning and establishment of a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area proposed at 4650 Broadway, New York, NY for the Sherman Plaza Project (the "Project") under Uniform Land Use Review Procedure ("ULURP") application number C 150438ZMM (the "Application"), but supporting the proposed extension of an existing C2-4 commercial overlay over the entire lot. A revised application (the "Revised Application") for the Project was submitted to the Department of City Planning on May 20, 2016. The revisions made in response to CB12M's resolution and comments from the Manhattan Borough President made in the course of its review of the Application. The Revised Application will be considered by the City Planning Commission at a public hearing on Wednesday, May 25, 2016; and

**Whereas:** The Project is an approximately 470,000 square foot mixed-use 23-story building with 30% of the units being affordable at an average area median income

("AMI") of 80% . To achieve the proposed building density, the site's current R7-2 zoning was to be changed to R9. Under current zoning an as-of-right residential building on the site can be a maximum of approximately 306,000 square feet. R7-2 zoning does not impose height limits. An as-of right building built to the maximum permitted density would be at least 10 stories, but could be taller. A prior mixed-use development proposal for the site was 18-stories tall; and

**Whereas:** CB12M objected to, among other things, the Project's scale – both with respect to neighborhood character and in relation to the scenic view shed of Fort Tryon Park and the Cloisters, the percentage of affordable units proposed and the targeted area median income level for the proposed affordable units; and

**Whereas:** The project proposed in the Revised Application (the "Revised Project") is a 15-story, approximately 369,786 square foot mixed-use building with 50% of the units being affordable at income levels from 40% AMI (\$31,080 for a family of three) to an average 80% AMI. The site is proposed to be rezoned to a mixed contextual zoning district, R9A/R8X, that imposes a maximum height limit of 175 feet or 17 stories. The Revised Project is 155 feet or 15 stories; and

**Whereas:** The Revised Application and the Revised Project reflect attention to the concerns outlined in CB12M's resolution and reiterated by the Manhattan Borough President's Office in the course of its review of the Application, although not all of the concerns raised are addressed. Now, therefore, be it

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan does not oppose the Revised Application provided that the final design of the Revised Project is 155 feet tall or less, and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan urges the applicants to review design options to further reduce the height of the Revised Project and urges the City Planning Commission to consider allowing greater lot coverage than generally permitted as-of-right under zoning to help facilitate a reduction to building height (a recent article in the New York Times observed that a significant number of residential buildings in Washington Heights and Inwood have greater lot coverage and more units than permitted by current zoning); and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan urges the elected officials that represent Washington Heights and Inwood to work with City Hall, Con Edison and other parties as necessary to make upgrading the subsurface utility infrastructure in Washington Heights and Inwood, inclusive of fiber optic broadband, a priority in order to more fully satisfy existing service demands and future demands of new development projects; and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan urges the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission to ensure that the environmental impacts of the Revised Project, including but not limited to impacts on Fort Tryon Park and the Cloisters and related to the potential presence of hazardous subsurface materials, are carefully assessed; and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan urges the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the elected officials that represent Washington Heights and Inwood to ensure that the distribution of affordable units in the Revised Project include a significant percentage, preferably 50%, of family-size, i.e.: two and three-bedroom, units.

Sincerely,



Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.  
Chairperson

CC: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate  
Hon. Charles Rangel, Congressman  
Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, State Senator

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member  
Hon. Guillermo Linares, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

May 27, 2016

Hon. Meenakshi Srinivasan  
Chair/Commissioner  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
David N. Dinkins Municipal Building  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor - North  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Srinivasan:

At the General Meeting of Community Board 12- Manhattan held on Tuesday, May 24, 2016 the following resolution passed with the following votes (34) In Favor, (0), Opposed, (0) Abstaining.

- Whereas: In May 2009 Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12-M") passed a resolution supporting the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission's ("LPC") recommendation to designate the Audubon Park Historic District ("Audubon Park"), and also urged LPC to diligently and expeditiously undertake the work necessary to recommend the designation of an expanded or adjacent historic district that includes a group of late-1800s row houses on West 158<sup>th</sup> Street ("626 – 648 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street" or the "West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses"), the City Council and Department of City Planning to approve LPC's recommendation for Audubon Park, and once LPC makes its recommendation, to approve the additional historic district designation. While Audubon Park was designated an historic district on May 12, 2009, LPC has not subsequently acted to recommend the designation of an expansion of Audubon Park to include the West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses; and
- Whereas: Audubon Park adjoins the Audubon Terrace Historic District and is located between West 155<sup>th</sup> Street and West 158<sup>th</sup> Street, Riverside Drive and Edward Morgan Place (formerly Audubon Place). It consists of 19 grand, architecturally distinctive apartment buildings and one Spanish Revival style two-family house. These buildings were constructed between 1905 and 1932 on the former 20-acre estate of famed naturalist and illustrator John James Audubon; and
- Whereas: The northern extension of Riverside Drive and the IRT subway spurred a boom of residential construction in northern Manhattan. The West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses were the first wave in the urbanization of the Audubon estate and represent an alternate vision to the pattern of urbanization as represented in the denser, apartment building development included in Audubon Park. Like many of the buildings in Audubon Park, 626-648 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street pre-date New York City's first zoning resolution of 1916. Land use and urban design considerations for these buildings, such as limiting construction to one- or two-family homes and setting them back from the property line, were controlled by deed restrictions; and
- Whereas: The West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses are an architecturally cohesive group of twelve residential buildings that are located immediately adjacent to Audubon Park, and were constructed in 1896 to 1898 to designs by John P. Leo, a noted architect, builder and

developer of residential buildings who was appointed Chairman of the Board of Standards and Appeals in 1921, on property that was part of the Audubon estate. They are older than the apartment buildings included in Audubon Park; and.

Whereas: The most well-known of the original residents of these row houses was Reginald Pelham Bolton, the first owner of 638 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street. In his obituary in 1942, the New York Times described Mr. Bolton as the “First Citizen of Washington Heights.” He was an engineer, historian, amateur archeologist, and an early proponent of historic preservation who served as Vice President of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, New York’s first organized preservation advocacy organization. Among his many achievements with that group was the preservation of the Poe Cottage in the Bronx. He also led a quarter-century effort, ultimately unsuccessful, to save the Audubon House and create around it a new “Audubon Park”; and

Whereas: Audubon Park and the West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses are located in an R8 zoning district which allows a maximum residential density of 6.02. While the apartment buildings located in Audubon Park are over-built with respect to current zoning, the two-family house included in Audubon Park and the West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses are under-built and considered soft sites from a zoning and development perspective. Additionally, there is a land-locked, undeveloped 7,500 square foot lot (the “Vacant Lot”) located behind eight of the twelve row houses that is also a soft site. Used as a community garden from the early 1900s through the 1970s, the Vacant Lot is currently used as a parking lot. It can accommodate an as-of-right residential building of approximately 45,000 square feet; the R8 zoning would not impose any height limit. With ever-increasing development pressure in Washington Heights and throughout Upper Manhattan, the potential exists for a developer to purchase one of the row houses that abut the Vacant Lot, combine the two zoning lots and build a new, out-of scale, out-of-context and architecturally inappropriate structure; and

Whereas: Preserving the block’s architectural integrity is now a more critical consideration than when CB12-M urged LPC to recommend designation of the West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses in 2009. Recognizing the imminent threat, residents of the existing and proposed expanded historic districts worked with the Riverside Oval Association, a community-based organization, to prepare in collaboration with the Historic Districts Council under its “Six to Celebrate” program a request for evaluation (the “RFE”) asking LPC to expand Audubon Park to include the West 158<sup>th</sup> Street Row Houses and the Vacant Lot; and

Whereas: CB12-M’s Land Use Committee was briefed on the RFE at its December 2, 2015 and May 4, 2016 meetings, and the RFE was submitted to LPC on April 24, 2016; now, therefore be it

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan supports the Request for Evaluation for the expansion of the Audubon Park Historic District to include 626-648 West 158<sup>th</sup> Street and the adjacent vacant lot located behind the eight of these row houses; and be it further

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan once again urges the Landmarks Preservation Commission to undertake diligently and expeditiously the work necessary to recommend the designation of the expansion of the Audubon Park Historic District; and be it additionally

Resolved: Community Board 12-M once again urges the City Council and Department of City Planning to approve, once it is hopefully made, the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s recommendation to expand the Audubon Park Historic District.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate  
Hon. Charles Rangel, Congressman  
Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member  
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