



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 27, 2011

Mathew Wambua
Commissioner
Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

**Re: 500 West 52nd Street
Part of Site 9C on the Clinton Urban Renewal Area
Supportive Housing**

Dear Commissioner Wambua:

At the June 8, 2011 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4's (CB4) Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee, Clinton Housing Development Company¹ (CHDC) presented its updated plans for the development of Supportive Housing at 500 West 52nd Street (the "Site"). 500 West 52nd Street is part of Site 9C on the Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA). CB4 has previously expressed its support for this project in letters dated January 4, 2006 and December 11, 2007. CB4 is writing to express its continued support for CHDC's development of the Site as supportive housing.

Introduction

CHDC proposes to develop the Site as 47 units of supportive housing, including two management units, social service offices, a common laundry room, community room and kitchen, rooftop open space and two ground floor commercial spaces.

History

500 West 52nd Street is located on the southwest corner of West 52nd Street and Tenth Avenue. It is a six (6) story commercial loft building that is currently occupied by artist studios and not-for-profit offices. Built between 1885 and 1897, 500 West 52nd Street was a piano factory owned by piano maker R.M. Bent & Co. It was one of 19 piano factories that existed in Hell's Kitchen and is a significant building in the industrial history of the Far West Side. The building also housed the Becker Brother player piano

¹ Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC, is also a member of the Board and Co-Chair of its Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. His interest has been disclosed, and he is not entitled to vote on any matter concerning this proposal that may come before the Board or the Committee, including approval of this letter.

factory. In 1969, the site was condemned by the City of New York as part of the CURA and it has been owned by the City ever since.

Relocation

Relocation plans include permanent off-site relocation of the current commercial, not-for-profit and artist tenants. The largest tenant, LeNoble Lumber, executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) in April 2005 to relocate to a new building on Site 7 of the CURA. LeNoble Lumber was temporarily relocated off-site in 2008. The five artist studios, INTAR, and Nakanami Carpentry will be offered affordable space within the CURA. Sonny's Grocery will relocate permanently off-site. Relocation will be negotiated with each tenant individually according to his or her needs.

Building Renovation and Layout

Building Renovation

The current structure will undergo gut rehabilitation, including new fire stairs and an elevator. A seventh floor, set back from the North and East façades, will be added. Entrance to the residential portion of the building will be from West 52nd Street. All units will be ADA accessible. The North and East façades of the building will be fully restored in accordance with state historic preservation guidelines, including use of wooden windows, historic masonry openings on the ground floor along West 52nd Street, and restoration of the historic painted signs from the piano factory on the façade.

Apartment Layouts

The project will produce 47 apartments:

Type	# of Units
SRO	26
Studio	19
1 Bedroom	1
2 Bedroom	1

Common Space

The ground floor will have an entrance lobby, front desk, building management and social services offices. The second floor will have an open space/roof deck. The roof will house the community room, community kitchen and an open space/roof deck. A laundry room will be located in the cellar.

Financing

HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program will provide a mortgage. The balance of the project financing will be from equity raised from the sale of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits. This building will also receive Section 8 Mod rental subsidies for the units occupied by formerly homeless tenants.

Housing Program

Staffing

Social service staffing shall consist of a resident building manager, resident superintendent, 24 hour/7 days a week front desk staff, a social worker, and three case workers.

Population Served

Low Income and Very Low Income tenants; those who are at or below 60% and 50% of Area Median Income (AMI), respectively.

Income Limits

Income limits are based on the LIHTC Income Limits for NYC. The following are the maximum LIHTC Income Limits for 2010:

Household Size	Metro Median Income *	50% AMI	60% AMI
1	55,500	27,750	33,300

Proposed Rents and Affordability

Rents will be based on the Low Income Housing Tax Credit guidelines. The following table shows 2010 limits for gas and rent (electric excluded), with the exception of the SRO units, where electric is included.

Unit Type	2010 LIHTC Rents	Section 8 SRO Moderate Rehab Rents
SRO	\$832	\$874
Studio	\$838	\$874

Apartment Mix and Distribution

The following table represents the proposed unit counts and distribution:

Unit Type	# of Units	% of Units	Sq. Ft. Range
SRO	26	55%	500 – 580 sq. ft.
Studio	19	40%	310 – 390 sq. ft.
1 Bedroom	1	2%	500 sq. ft.
2 Bedroom	1	2%	898 sq. ft.
Total	47		

Tenant Selection

Low Income Units

For the low income rental units, an open application process will be conducted. This begins with availability being advertised at 125 locations within the Clinton community. After a prospective tenant meets the threshold household and income limitations, the applicant's attendance at an open house at the building is required. Following submission of documents supporting income, employment and credit, potential tenants will undergo an interview process conducted by CHDC and its social service provider, Hudson Guild.

Supportive Housing Units

For the supportive housing units, a referral process is conducted through social service agencies, the Department of Homeless Services and the Department of Mental Health. This process will begin prior to building completion. A psychosocial background report is included in all referrals. After meeting threshold income limitations, the applicant's attendance at an open house at the building is required. Following submission of documents supporting income, employment and credit, potential tenants will undergo an interview process conducted by CHDC and its social service provider, Hudson Guild.

CB4 is pleased to offer its continued support to this project which expands the available supportive housing for homeless individuals and low income tenants on a smaller scale with careful site selection. This method of providing supportive housing promotes integration of the project into the neighborhood. We look forward to engaging with the project as it moves ahead.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson, Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Elisa Gerontianos, Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Local Electeds
R. Visnauskas – HPD
B. De la Torre – HPD
T. Walters – HPD
S. Levenson – HPD
T. O'Hanlon – HPD

