



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Delores Rubin
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

September 28, 2016

Carl Weisbrod, Chair
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

**Re: ULURP Application No. C 160275 ZSM
Special Permit for a 10-Space Accessory Parking Garage at 532 West 20th Street**

Dear Chair Weisbrod:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) recommends approval of the application with two conditions for a special permit under ZR 13-45 and ZR 13-451 for an increase in the number of parking spaces at 532 West 20th Street from two to ten. The Board's recommendation is based on the belief that the small number of additional spaces (eight) meets the special permit findings and will have a minimal impact on the neighborhood. The two conditions are that the building's owners not be permitted to sublet their parking spaces and that any spaces not bought by residents be made available to the public only on a monthly rental basis. This recommendation reflects the consensus of both the Board's Chelsea Land Use Committee and Executive Committee, neither had a quorum, and is subject to ratification at its Full Board meeting on Wednesday, October 5th.

Background

The proposed development at 532 West 20th Street is an as-of-right eleven-story building occupying Block 691 Lot 50 in a C6-2 district in Subarea E of the Special West Chelsea District. The development will have nine residential units. There will be no commercial space. Under ZR 13-11(a) the site is permitted two accessory parking spaces for the residential units. The proposed garage will be entirely on the ground floor and will include a booth for a 24/7 attendant. It will have five stackers each accommodating two cars. All of the parking spaces are intended to be accessory parking spaces to be used by the residents of the proposed development. If any spaces are not purchased by the condo-owners, they will be made available to non-residents but only on a month to month basis. Transient parking would not be permitted. If a resident requests a parking space, a monthly rental space would be given to the resident with a thirty day notice to the renter. The garage includes ten bike racks; five are required.

Analysis

The Board believes that the applicant has shown that the project complies with the required findings including pedestrian traffic, street functioning and traffic congestion. West 20th Street is one-way westbound. A pedestrian walkway across Twelfth Avenue at West 20th Street is on the north side of West 20th Street, across the street from the site under consideration. Safety measures for the proposed garage include a speed bump, a stop sign and a striped pedestrian path in the garage. The new building would decrease the curb cut on West 20th from the existing 55-foot width to a 12 foot width. The applicant predicts that three cars in the morning would be going in and out of the garage, three in the afternoon and three in the evening.

ZR 13-45(d) requires compliance with the additional finding set out in ZR 13-451, that "the number of off-street parking spaces in the proposed parking facility is reasonable and not excessive in relation to recent trends in close proximity to the proposed facility..."

The Department of City Planning (DCP) addressed the issue of reasonableness by developing methodology to calculate a "parking ratio." The calculation of the parking ratio requires consideration of new residential dwelling units and new and lost parking spaces during a ten year look-back period through the completion of the proposed facility. The application guidelines also state, "Additionally, the City Planning Commission...may take into account levels of vacancy in existing parking facilities within the area of the proposed parking facility." The applicant has calculated that during a 10-year "look back" period, there was an increase of 244 spaces and an increase of 1,428 residential units resulting in a parking ratio of 17.1 percent. The proposed parking garage would increase the parking ratio to 17.7 percent, below the target ratio of 20 percent established by DCP.

CB4 Objections to Department of City Planning's Parking Ratio Methodology

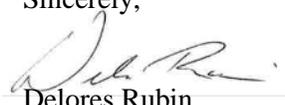
As we have written before, CB4 believes that the DCP methodology is not appropriate for the West Chelsea area. At the beginning of the mandated ten year look-back period, the West Chelsea area was a manufacturing district with a large over-supply of off-street parking caused by warehousing vacant lots as parking pending favorable economic and social conditions for development of the lots. These parking spaces were not fully utilized except on special occasions, such as events at Madison Square Garden. There also were few residences within the one-third mile study area of the proposed development, and even fewer legal ones. Thus, these parking spaces largely accommodated transient users, not residential users. (See additional issues CB4 raised in its August 10, 2015 letter about ULURP application C 150309). At an October 21, 2015 meeting attended by several CB4 members, two representatives from the Manhattan Borough President's Office, DCP Manhattan Office Director and two other planners, CB4 raised these issues about DCP's methodology for calculating additional parking spaces for residential growth. It was our understanding that DCP would revisit this methodology, particularly ZR 11-21, exceptions to guidelines for unique site or project considerations. We would appreciate DCP letting us know if there has been any progress in re-examining the methodology for the West Chelsea area.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Despite CB4's objections to DCP's methodology to calculate the residential growth parking ratio, the Board believes that the number of proposed off-street parking spaces for 532 West 20th Street would have minimal impact on the neighborhood and would not create dangerous or congested conditions. We recommend approval of this special permit with the conditions that residents not be permitted to sublet their parking spaces and that spaces not purchased by residents be rented to non-residents only on a monthly basis.

September 27, 2016

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair

Manhattan Community Board 4



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
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