

GALE A. BREWER
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6
MANHATTAN

DISTRICT OFFICE
565 COLUMBUS AVENUE, AT 87TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10024
(212) 873-0282
FAX (212) 873-0279

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1744
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-6975
FAX (212) 513-7717

gale.brewer@council.nyc.gov
www.council.nyc.gov



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April 8, 2013

Robert Tierney
Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Tierney:

I write to express my support for the designation of P.S. 199 located on 270 West 70 Street as a New York City landmark. The city-owned school is a truly remarkable building. It is an architectural and historical gem, and by these standards already a landmark. I urge the Commission to make it official.

P.S. 199 was the first public school designed by renowned post-war era architect Edward Durell Stone. Built in 1963, the hovering roofline is reminiscent of Stone's celebrated U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. The colonnade of textured brick beams built in between the thin base of the sidewalk and the even thinner cornice makes this school one of the most unique and unusual buildings in Manhattan. The building is one of Stone's last surviving works in New York City and should be landmarked.

As you know, the NYC Educational Construction Fund (ECF) has issued a Request For Expressions of Interest (RFEI) and is currently reviewing proposals received in response to the RFEI. The Department of Education (DOE) and ECF propose to demolish this school and rebuild P.S. 199 inside a high rise residential tower.

In light of the ongoing development in the immediate surrounding neighborhood, the need to preserve historically significant buildings has never been more fundamental to maintaining balance, echoed time and again by my constituents. Protecting P.S. 199 squarely addresses this concern. In the interest of my constituents, I urge you to designate this building as a landmark.

I look forward to your response. If you have any questions, contact me or Shula Warren of my office at (212) 788-6975.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer".
Gale A. Brewer

cc: Kate Daly, Executive Director, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission



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February 21, 2013

Dennis Walcott
 Chancellor
 NYC Department of Education
 52 Chambers Street
 New York, NY 10007

Kathleen Grimm
 Deputy Chancellor of Infrastructure & Planning
 NYC Department of Education
 52 Chambers Street
 New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Walcott and Deputy Chancellor Grimm:

I write to follow up on my January 29, 2013 letter regarding the status of the Request For Expressions of Interest (RFEI) issued by the NYC Educational Construction Fund (ECF) for PS 191, located at 210 West 61 Street, New York, NY 10023, and PS 199, located at 270 West 70 Street, New York, NY 10023, both of which are in my Council district. It is my understanding that ECF is currently reviewing proposals received in response to the RFEI.

In a follow up conversation between my staff and Jamie Smarr, ECF Executive Director, my office was told that if ECF staff identified realistic projects for either site - projected for June, 2013 - that the school and community would then be engaged in reviewing the proposal. Mr. Smarr went on to say that the approval for a proposal would be subject to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP); he repeated this statement publicly at a February 13 meeting of Community Education Council 3. However, according to Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, the two land parcels are Department of Education (DOE) controlled, and they are not subject to ULURP. The Council's Land Use Division as well does not anticipate a project of this nature being subject to ULURP, but rather more likely the school site selection process, pursuant to Section 1731 of the New York City School Construction Authority Act. Indeed, the RFEI's Transaction Summary states that ULURP is not required, noting that this "...is an important element of the ECF program which specifically benefits developers as it makes an 'As-of-Right' project feasible." I ask again that you update my office and all stakeholders on how members of the school community and neighborhood will be notified and engaged, and identify the approval process should a project be selected for development.

On behalf of the schools and families in my district, I would like to raise other serious concerns:

Mr. Smarr said that if either school site is chosen for development, that it will be the developer's responsibility to relocate the students during the agreed-upon period of construction. Both PS 191 and PS 199 are zoned elementary schools; will the developer be required to relocate either school near the original site's location? If not, is the DOE or developer responsible for providing appropriate alternative student transportation? Will the developer be required to house the school in one location or be allowed to divide the grades over one or more different sites, leading to a need for multiple principals and all other support staff for many years to come?

Mr. Smarr told me that feasible proposals for either parcel would be identified by June 2013. As you know, the Mayor recently presented the Preliminary City Budget, signifying the beginning of the annual budget process. Borough President Stringer and I have directed significant capital Resolution A funds to both PS 191 and PS 199. Most recently, I allocated \$900,000 to PS 191 for the creation of a multi-media center and renovated schoolyard, and PS 199 will soon open their library media center which received \$115,000 from my office, in addition to a greenhouse and Science Pavilion to which I allocated \$165,000. These taxpayer funds, as well as those used for building upgrades through the Five Year Capital plan, including light fixture remediation at PS 199, would be wasted should either building be demolished for development. At a recent CEC meeting, the SCA also identified PS 191 as one of the District 3 schools being scheduled for PCB remediation this summer. Will the light fixtures be replaced as scheduled if PS 191 is to be demolished? In addition, how will a developer be held responsible for dealing with PCBs at either site?

Lastly, following the conversation between my staff and Mr. Smarr, I learned that Friday, February 15, 2012, was his last day at ECF. Who is serving as the interim Executive Director during this critical time, and will the timelines projected by Mr. Smarr and the information communicated by him need to be altered due to his departure?

I believe these two proposed projects need a great deal of sunshine and thought. So far, there has been very little information or clarity from the DOE or ECF. Instead of quietly placing an ad requesting proposals to tear down our schools and rebuild them inside high rises, in order to earn revenue for schools city-wide, and without regard to the loss of light and air and increased density in our neighborhood, the DOE and ECF should sit down with school leadership, the CEC, CB7 and the elected officials to discuss the impact of its proposal. At this point, there are many more questions than answers, and no decision should be made until all of the facts and impacts have been considered.

I look forward to your early response. If you have questions, contact me or Shula Warren of my office at (212) 788-6975.

Sincerely,



Gale A. Brewer

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January 29, 2013

Dennis Walcott
Chancellor
NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Kathleen Grimm
Deputy Chancellor of Infrastructure & Planning
NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Walcott and Deputy Chancellor Grimm:

I write to inquire as to the status of RFEIs issued by the NYC Educational Construction Fund for PS 191, located at 210 West 61 Street, New York, NY 10023, and PS 199, located at 270 West 70 Street, New York, NY 10023, both of which are in my district. At a Community Education Council meeting on January 23, 2013, a representative from the School Construction Authority said it was his understanding that Requests for Proposals (RFPs) would be issued at the end of the month for both sites.

When will the RFP be released and what is the timeline for responses? Please send me a copy of the RFP and I would appreciate your offices updating me on the planning and process ahead. Additionally, what is the procedure for receiving public comments on the RFPs and how will members of the school communities be notified and engaged?

I look forward to your response. If you have any questions, you may contact Shula Warren of my office at (212) 788-6975.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer".

Gale A. Brewer

cc: Jamie Smarr, NYC Department of Education