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## Community Board No. 2, Manhattan

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Greenwich Village ♦ Little Italy ♦ SoHo ♦ NoHo ♦ Hudson Square ♦ Chinatown ♦ Gansevoort Market

September 26, 2025

Hon. Shampa Chanda  
Chair  
Board of Standards and Appeals  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Chanda:

At its Full Board meeting on September 18, 2025, Community Board #2, Manhattan (CB2, Man.) adopted the following resolution:

### **Resolution on 51 Little West 12th Street (2025-22-BZ)**

1. **Discussion of Resolution for 51 Little West 12th Street**, New York, NY 10014 – Application to the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) for a Zoning Variance pursuant to ZR 72-21 to permit the construction of a 14-story, mixed-use commercial and residential building in an M1-5 Zoning District.

### **Whereas:**

- 1) 51 Little West 12th Street (Block 645, Lot 21) is a vacant, 2,581-square foot lot located adjacent to the High Line and directly south of the Standard Hotel.
- 2) The applicant is asking for a variance to permit a larger structure with a FAR of 7.02, with a total of 18,128 square feet and a total height of 176 feet, consisting of 14 stories plus a cellar. Furthermore, the variance asks for a change in use to permit residential use across 12 floors, and 2 floors of commercial and retail use.
- 3) The as-of-right uses permitted at this location allow for a FAR of 5.0 for manufacturing and commercial uses, and a FAR of 6.5 for community facility uses.
- 4) The lot is currently vacant and has been since 2010. Prior to that, there was a 4-story commercial building extant on the site. The applicant claims that construction of the Standard Hotel led to building instability, which ultimately resulted in the Department of Buildings (DOB) issuing an emergency declaration to demolish the building in 2010.
- 5) The applicant has claimed that this address meets the five findings necessary for a variance as follows:
  - a) **Site conditions.** According to the applicant the following conditions are unique: poor subsurface conditions, the lot's small size does not allow conforming uses, and the lot is currently vacant.

- b) **Rate of return.** The applicant claims that there are no allowable uses that would produce a reasonable rate of return.
- c) **Neighborhood character.** The applicant claims that there is considerable existing and planned residential development nearby.
- d) **Self-created hardship.** The applicant claims that the hardship is not self-created.
- e) **Minimal variance necessary.** The applicant claims that this is the minimal variance needed for a reasonable return.

**Therefore be it resolved**, that CB2, Man. recommends **denial** of this application on the basis that the applicant has failed to meet all five findings needed for the granting of a variance according to ZR 72-21:

### **1. Site Conditions**

- a) Subsurface conditions: All the lots in this area and south of it in our Community Board have similar subsurface conditions, as the waterfront was built on landfill. The subsurface conditions are not unique.
- b) Size of the lot. The lot size is 25' x 103.25'. CB 2 is filled with lots of this size (25' x 100'). There is nothing unique about the size of the lot.
- c) Lots of this size have conforming uses on them. This will be further discussed in the reasonable return section.
- d) The lot is vacant. The reasons for this fact will be discussed in the hardship section.

### **2. Rate of return**

- a) The Committee finds that the applicant did not pursue all possible uses. There was no exploration of a boutique hotel such as Restoration Hardware on a neighboring Street. There was no exploration of a single-use commercial or single-family residential building.
- b) The Committee finds that the applicant did not use current figures for either prevailing commercial or residential return in the area.

### **3. Neighborhood character**

- a) The Committee finds that the applicant did not analyze the neighborhood correctly. This area is a commercial area, not a residential area.
- b) The Committee finds the applicant's citing of the proposed Gansevoort Square project premature and incomplete. This project is merely proposed so should not be cited as the current character. Also, most of this project's footprint will be museum space, not residential space.
- c) Finally, the applicant's building is a looming building next to an historic district and in an outlier area with few models to provide a model.

### **4. Self-created hardship**

- a) The applicant originally had a building on the lot.

- b) During the construction of the adjacent Standard Hotel, the building was undermined and eventually condemned by the NYC Department of Buildings. Its demolition was required by the agency.
- c) Upon Committee questioning, the applicant stated that he had not pursued any pre-construction protections from the Standard Hotel and after construction had not pursued legal action against the Hotel for the damage to his building.
- d) The Committee finds that the hardship of the vacant lot is self-created inasmuch as the applicant did nothing to protect his property from this damage which led to demolition.

**5. Minimum variance**

- a) The applicant has not submitted enough evidence for the Committee to determine whether or not this is the minimum variance.
- b) The Committee has found higher returns on both commercial and residential projects in the area. These returns suggest that the applicant could build a conforming building that would yield a good return. But the applicant did not fully explore conforming scenarios.

Vote: Passed, with 28 Board members in favor, and 1 in opposition (R. Sanz), and 4 abstained (R. Kessler, J. Liff, E. Siegel, E. Smith).

We respectfully request that your agency take action consistent with the positions expressed in the above.

Respectfully submitted,



Valerie De La Rosa  
Chair, Community Board 2/Manhattan



Eugene Yoo  
Chair, CB2/M Land Use Committee

VDLR/fa

cc: Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Adrienne Adams, NYC Council Speaker  
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NY State Senate, 47<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY State Assembly, 66<sup>th</sup> District