



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

January 8, 2018

Signe Nielsen
President
Public Design Commission of the City of New York
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 545 West 52nd Street
Proposed Stair and Elevator Bulkhead Extensions**

Dear Ms. Nielsen,

At its regular Board meeting on January 3, 2018, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) voted to recommend approval by a vote of 35 for, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 1 present but not eligible to vote¹, for the proposed stair and elevator bulkhead extensions proposed for 545 West 52nd Street ("Project") by the Clinton Housing Development Company (CHDC). The approval reflects the recommendation of MCB4's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee for the project after a presentation from CHDC on December 13th, 2017.

545 West 52nd Street is a City-owned property net leased to CHDC. CHDC proposes to renovate the building to create artist studios, rehearsal and performance spaces, offices for not for profit theater companies, music studios, and two galleries. MCB4 wrote letters in March 2006 and November 2016 in support of the Project (see attached).

Proposed Work

CHDC intends to replace an existing service elevator with a passenger elevator and extend the elevator to the roof. The extension of the elevator will require a 15-foot increase in the height of the existing elevator bulkhead. An elevator vestibule will be added.

MCB4 has reviewed the plan for the work and recommends the Public Design Commission approve the proposal.

¹ Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC and a member of MCB4's Hell's Kitchen/Clinton Land Use Committee recused himself from voting on the matter at both the Committee and Full Board meetings.

Sincerely,

[Signed 1/8/18]

Burt Lazarin

Chair

Manhattan Community Board 4

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'Jd' in a cursive, stylized font.

Jean-Daniel Noland

Chair

Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Enclosure

Cc: Maria Torres-Springer, Commissioner, HPD
Clinton Housing Development Company



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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

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

March 9, 2007

Hon. Shaun Donovan
Commissioner
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: 549 West 52nd Street (portion of Clinton Urban Renewal Area Site 7) – Net lease to Clinton Housing Development Company

Dear Commissioner Donovan:

We write to support the proposal by Clinton Housing Development Company to take over management and operation of the building at 549 West 52nd Street pursuant to a net lease with HPD.¹

The building was acquired by the City more than 30 years ago, when the Clinton Urban Renewal Area was created. It has been used over the years by HPD to house a variety of arts organizations, many of them displaced by development plans elsewhere. Current occupants include the Womens Interart Center, Ensemble Studio Theater, Institute for Visual Research, Medicine Show and Soundscape, among others.

Over the years, the building has suffered from a lack of adequate resources for maintenance and repair. The roof leaks, windows are broken, the elevator works intermittently and hot water runs out of cold water taps. The building has also suffered from a lack of local management. Space has been sublet and tenancies have become confused.

At the February 14, 2007 meeting of the Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee, CHDC presented its proposal, as follows:

- HPD has agreed to maintain 549 West 52nd Street as a visual and performing arts center.
- CHDC will focus on basic building maintenance and repairs for the elevator, boiler, plumbing and electrical systems, as well as waterproofing.
- Current prime tenants who directly lease their space from the City of New York would remain at the same rent while a plan for the building is being developed.

¹ Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC, is also a member of this Board and 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.

- The current Women’s Interart Center lease will be terminated; WIC’s sub-tenants will be offered direct month-to-month leases, and space will be leased to WIC appropriate to its needs.
- CHDC will meet with all prime and sub-tenants to sort out tenancy and clarify who actually occupies all spaces.
- CHDC will meet with all prime and sub-tenants to inventory space and use needs to determine the program requirements for the building’s future use.
- The goal of the future plan is to provide permanently affordable studio, performance and administrative support spaces.
- CHDC will report to the Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 every 60 days (or as requested) on progress toward clarifying tenant issues and program requirements, as well as addressing building maintenance issues.

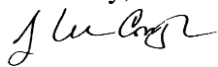
The committee’s meeting was attended by many of the building’s occupants. Ronnie Geist from the Women’s Interart Center understandably refrained from comment. No other occupant voiced any opposition to CHDC’s proposal or provided any information to the committee that challenged the wisdom of the proposal.

CHDC similarly took over management last year of the building at 500-508 W. 52nd Street, which is also occupied by arts organizations and individual artists. Since then, tenants of that building have reported a marked improvement in the building’s operation and state of repair.

We are therefore pleased to support CHDC’s proposal to manage 549 West 52nd Street as a necessary first step toward developing a long-term plan for the building.

We are delighted that HPD remains committed to maintaining 549 West 52nd Street as a visual and performing arts center. With the Clinton Green theater building nearing completion on the opposite corner of the block, and the Irish Arts Center’s plans for 726 Eleventh Avenue, 52nd Street has great potential as a secure home for the arts organizations and artists that are now active in the building and the surrounding area and as a magnet for other arts activities. We look forward to working with HPD, CHDC and the arts community toward realization of that potential.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Anna Hayes Levin
Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use

cc: electeds

CHDC

HPD – John Warren

All tenants: Marguerite A.L. Lewitin, Women’s Interart Center
Denny Denniston and John McCormack, Ensemble Studio Theater
Don Porcaro, Leslie Wayne, David Shapiro, Institute for Visual Research
Barbara Vann, Medicine Show
Verna Gillis, Soundscape
David Slivka, Artist’s Studio



DELORES RUBIN
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

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November 21, 2016

Deputy Commissioner Daniel Hernandez
Office of Neighborhood Strategies
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

Re: Presentation on City-Owned Net Lease Buildings Community Development Plan

Dear Mr. Hernandez,

The Committee would like to thank Clinton Housing Development Company (CHDC) for their presentation of City-Owned Net Lease Buildings Community Development Plan for Affordable Housing, Community Cultural Facilities, and Open Space at the October 11th Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use meeting. The Plan comprises a phased development of the following district sites:

- 560 W 52nd Street–Affordable Units, Community Facility, Green Space.
- 500 W 52nd Street–Affordable Senior Housing for Performing Artists and Homeless Individuals, Community Facility.
- 464 W 25th Street–Affordable Units.
- 545 W 52nd Street– Cultural Facility, Green Space.
- 460 W 37th Street–Affordable Units, Community Facility, Cultural Facility.
- 552 W 52nd Street–Affordable Units, Community Facility, Cultural Facility.
- 555 W 51st Street–Green Space
- 726 Eleventh Avenue/553 W 51st Street–Cultural Facility

The presentation provided particular detail about the 10-story building at 545 West 52nd Street. As you are no doubt aware, the Committee has reviewed prior redevelopment efforts over many years, and more recently was witness to a prolonged legal conflict over the fate of the property. We are pleased to see that the matter is finally resolved, and that the building's community-based redevelopment is now moving forward

We are encouraged by the following features of the overall Plan:

The proposed mix of low-, moderate-, and middle-income apartments. Our district has suffered substantial losses of affordable units through escalating rents and development practices which have too often included tenant harassment, illegal demolition and illegal conversion.

The inclusion of Community Facilities such as existing nonprofit organizations and PAL's after-school program.

The incorporation of Cultural Facilities such as several Off-Broadway theatre companies—such as the Ensemble Studio Theater, INTAR, and Medicine Show Theater, whose representatives were in attendance—which currently call our district home. Such assets are key to the district's cultural and financial development.

The development of green space at the proposed Captain Post Garden on West 52nd Street and the Juan Alonso Garden extension on West 51st Street. Currently, less than 2% of our district's land is open space/recreational in use.

We are pleased to note CHDC's active engagement with Hell's Kitchen residents, arts organizations, and community-based organizations in their development process. We look forward to reviewing each project as they phase in.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Jean-Daniel Noland, Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Cc: Clinton Housing Development Corporation
Hudson Yards Development Corporation
Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance BID