



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Burt Lazarin
Chair

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April 9 2018

Dodie Gumaer, Board Treasurer
Nicole Cicogna, Executive Director
Hartley House
1441 Broadway, Suite 6049
New York, NY 100018

**Re: Hartley House - Potential Sale of Buildings
413 West 46th Street**

Dear Ms. Gumaer and Ms. Cicogna:

On March 15, 2018, Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee received a presentation from Hartley House regarding the organization's financial state and the potential sale of its facility located at 413 West 46th Street. Members of the Committee and community residents both expressed deep concern regarding the future of not only Hartley House, the organization, but also of its historic building as part of both the fabric of West 46th Street and the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community. MCB4 is writing to request that you postpone the proposed sale of the facility and work with the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community, the City Council Speaker and the Community Board to develop an approach which secures the financial future of the Hartley House organization and redevelops the buildings for ongoing charitable and community use. MCB4 believes both of these goals are achievable and not mutually exclusive.

Background

Since 1897, Hartley House has been serving the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community. The organization's 121 year record of service provided to the community is unmatched. Headquartered in 413 West 46th Street, a row of 4 four story brownstones with a Civil War era rear house, it is located midblock between 9th and 10th Avenues.

In those 121 years of operation, Hartley House has developed a strong presence in the community. At its inception, Hartley House was focused on improving the home lives of the poor families who lived in Hell's Kitchen's tenements. Programs included cooking and sewing classes as well as lessons on hygiene and child care. The programs offered early on were so successful that the settlement house, which originally only used a single brownstone at 413 West

46th Street, expanded into the adjacent brownstones at 411 and 409 West 46th Street within the organization's first two years¹. The buildings included a gym, an auditorium and medical clinics.

Throughout its history, Hartley House has adjusted its services to respond to the needs of the local community. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the organization hosted a wider variety of programs, including after school programs for children, GED preparation classes, English as Second Language classes, creative arts programs, family day care, and many other programs.

Hartley House programs have served generations of community residents, each of whom has memories of the building and the wide array of activities that took place inside

In 2017 the organization decided to close the main settlement house building and temporarily relocate its offices from 413 West 46th Street to 1441 Broadway while continuing some of its programming at various locations around the community, including Manhattan High School and Fountain House. The Hartley House organization currently manages an after school program, case management for seniors, and a bingo night.

Building Issues and Hartley House Response

In its presentation on March 15, 2018, Hartley House represented that its facility at 413 West 46th Street had become a burden for the organization. Building mechanical systems were aging, requiring ongoing repair. Roofs were leaking. General building maintenance had been deferred, with increased maintenance costs in the organization's annual operating budgets. Furthermore, the Director of the organization noted that the building no longer serves Hartley House's current programming needs and a full gut renovation would be required to serve those needs.

When asked if Hartley House had sought public funding to replace its failing heating system, the Executive Director replied that the degree of paperwork associated with public funding was an obstacle for the organization. The Executive Director further noted that the organization's Board of Trustees made a "deliberate decision" to be funded exclusively through private grants and donations.

A community member noted, however, that in 1993 the organization received an \$869,000 grant from the Clinton Preservation Fund, a fund established by the City and State of New York during the 1985 Times square rezoning². Hartley House was granted funds to renovate its lobby, courtyard, and rear building, which dates back to the Civil War.

In 2017, Hartley House hired Denham Wolf, a consulting company that provides real estate services to not for profit organizations. Denham Wolf proposed selling the property at 413 West 46th Street as a means of generating funds for Hartley House to continue to operate and provide services at a better sized location suitable to its current programs.

¹ VCU Libraries. Social Welfare History Project: Hartley House Settlement. <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/hartley-house-settlement/>

² That \$25M fund was established to make grants and loans to finance the renovation of affordable housing, community facilities and provide legal services to tenants as mitigation of the effects of the Times Square Redevelopment

Community Response and MCB4 Proposal

The community response from both committee members and the public was vocal and passionate. At the meeting held on March 15th, Members of the community expressed a strong connection to Hartley House, both the organization and its programs and its 121 year home at 413 West 46th Street. Community residents noted that several generations of their families spent significant time at Hartley House—both as participants in its various classes and activities and as volunteers. Members of the Community Board shared that the building had provided a day care center and served as important center for community meetings and events.

Hartley House matters as both an organization and a place. One community referred to it as the heart of Hell's Kitchen. Manhattan Community Board 4 supports that view. The ongoing viability of Hartley House the organization and Hartley House the place must not be mutually exclusive. The Hell's Kitchen community needs to preserve the organization and its significant long-term home. Selling Hartley House, the place, is not the only solution to long term financial health for Hartley House, the organization.

Over the past two decades, MCB4 has had extensive experience developing private and public sector solutions to preserve our neighborhood's cultural, public and not-for-profit institutions. The following are a few examples:

- Clinton Green Theatre Complex (502 West 53rd Street)

Developed on city owned land by a private developer as part of an 80/20 housing development, the complex houses the 52nd Street Project (after school program), ART New York Theater and rehearsal complex, and MCC Theatre. The core and shell was built by the developer, the interior outfitting funded by the City of New York

- NYPD's Mounted Unit (550 West 53rd Street)

In 2012, as part of the rezoning of the Mercedes House site, MCB4 worked with the City Council and Mayor's office to establish a permanent home for NYPD mounted unit which had been in temporary quarters for 15 years.

- Irish Arts Center (726 11th Avenue)

Providing a place for Irish culture since 1974, MCB4 supported and helped negotiate complex development plans for the Irish Arts Center to move from West 51st Street to a tire garage on 11th Avenue to support a major expansion of its programs. The project is supported by city, state and private funds.

- FDNY/EMS—Westside Base (645 West 29th Street)

As part of a rezoning and mixed income housing development, MCB4 is securing an 18,000 square foot facility house this vital public facility serving the west side from West 12th to West 62nd Streets.

In all these cases, MCB4 has worked with the affected not for profits or city agencies to secure a combination of public and private funding and location to realize the projects. MCB4 has worked with the Mayor's Office, the City Council, and Manhattan Borough President as partners to bring such projects to fruition.

Hartley House, the organization, and Hartley House, the place, are community assets and resources. One does not have to be sacrificed to save the other.

MCB4 is committed to working with Hartley House to find a new, permanent, and affordable home for the organization suited to its current needs within the Hell's Kitchen community. MCB4 is also committed to working with Hartley House, the organization, to secure a community facility use for Hartley House, the place, at 413 West 46th Street. MCB4 further notes that given the Mayor and the Council Speaker's desire to preserve neighborhood services and affordable housing, multiple opportunities are present in the City's Capital budget to accomplish this goal. Lastly, MCB4 is aware of Hartley House's needs for ongoing funding for its social service programs and believes it is possible to develop such funding from both public and ongoing income from the current building to meet that need.

Conclusion

MCB4 and members of the community care deeply about ensuring that Hartley House is financially stable and able to continue serving its mission. MCB4 requests Hartley House take a pause in pursuing the sale of its historic community asset as the only solution to its financial needs. MCB4 is offering its assistance, in partnership with our local elected officials, to ensure that Hartley House, the organization, and Hartley House, the place are preserved as ongoing community resources.

MCB4 is confident that all parties can arrive at a solution to ensure the survival of Hartley House as an organization and 413 West 46th Street as a community asset—a center of activity and social service resource in Hell's Kitchen since 1897—both of which are essential to the fabric of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
MCB4 Chair



[signed 4/9/18]
Barbara Davis, Co-Chair
Housing, Health &
Human Services Committee

Joe Restuccia, Co-Chair
Housing, Health &
Human Services Committee

Cc Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S Congress
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senator
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, City Council
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council