



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**Burt Lazarin**  
Chair

**Jesse Bodine**  
District Manager

March 13, 2018

Maria Torres-Springer  
Commissioner  
Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development  
100 Gold Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: 201 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Tenant Interim Lease Development  
Block 797 – Lots 80, 81, 82, and 83**

Dear Commissioner Torres-Springer,

On February 13, 2018 Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) received a presentation from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program (ANCP) regarding the redevelopment of four buildings located at 201 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 203 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 205 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 207 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue (the "Site"). These buildings have been in disrepair and have been a major concern to MCB4, the Council of Chelsea Block Associations (CCBA), and the Council Member for many years. Three of the four commercial spaces on the Site are currently vacant, along with a majority of the residential units. The Board has long advocated for these buildings to be renovated for the production of affordable cooperative units and included the Site in its 2014 Affordable Housing Plan.

By a vote of 35 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, MCB4 voted to **support the development concept with conditions.**

**Background**

The site is comprised of four five story tenement buildings located at 201 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 203 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 205 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 207 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The buildings, which contain 14 residential units, are contiguous and sit on the southeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. Built around 1870, they are pre-old law tenements.

Following years of abandonment on behalf of the landlord, the City foreclosed on the buildings on April 28, 1976. Over the next few decades, the buildings were entered into several different HPD programs, beginning with the Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) Program in 1978. The buildings left the TIL Program in the mid-1980s and were then directly managed by HPD until the late

1990s. At that point, they were briefly placed in the Neighborhood Redevelopment Program (NRP). In 1997 the buildings were re-entered into the TIL Program.

From 1997 until present, as the TIL Program changed, the buildings were moved to the Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program (ANCP) and a private developer was designated in 2013. HPD began relocating tenants in preparation for redevelopment of the Site.

ANCP later determined the sponsor was not performing and designated a new sponsor in 2017. At the request of then Council Member—now Council Speaker—Corey Johnson, ANCP and the new sponsor met with representatives of MCB4 to discuss plans for redevelopment on August 7, 2017. At that meeting, ANCP and the development team informed the Board that the buildings could not be preserved and required demolition.

MCB4 was not pleased to hear that assessment, considering that it had advocated for the renovation of the buildings for over two decades. The Board requested that the sponsor undertake a full review to determine whether the structures could be preserved.

MCB4 did not hear from HPD and the development team again until November 2017, when the sponsor informed the Board that after completing a full review of the structural condition of the buildings, they could not be preserved. The Board asked HPD and the development team to meet with the Housing Committee for a full presentation.

### **Proposed Demolition and New Construction**

In its presentation on February 13, 2018, HPD and the sponsor stated that the structural reports indicated that the buildings could not be preserved. Both parties proposed to construct a new building with affordable cooperative units and ground floor commercial use. The Board reluctantly agreed to the proposal, noting the condition of the buildings was a direct result of HPD's inaction for over 20 years.

HPD's announcement prompted a great deal of discussion among committee members, members of the public, and HPD regarding future plans for the site<sup>1</sup>.

At the presentation, MCB4 requested that the plans for the buildings, which have not been developed, take into consideration the following:

- Apartment layouts that accommodate the buildings' existing tenants as future homeowners
- Compatibility with character of the surrounding buildings of the Chelsea neighborhood
- ADA compliance, including the provision of an elevator

HPD noted, in addition, that with a plan that proposes demolition and construction of a new building would now require a Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP). HPD represented

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<sup>1</sup> The Board would like to note that the construction of a new building will result in a single structure. That structure could be up to two stories above the five story buildings currently on the Site. However, the Board understands final project massing has not been prepared.

that the ULURP would proceed in 2018, with construction beginning in mid-2019 and finishing at the end of 2020.

### **Current Tenants**

After the November 2017 meeting, the Board discussed the temporary relocation of the three households still on Site. Clinton Housing Development Company (CHDC) offered to assist in the temporary relocation. On January 9, 2018 HPD met with two of the three onsite tenants, who inspected CHDC apartments and stated that they were interested in relocating temporarily.

At the presentation on February 13, 2018, two tenants were present: one currently living onsite and one that had been temporarily relocated eight years ago. Both tenants expressed dissatisfaction with HPD's lack of communication, clarity, and lack of developed plans. The offsite tenant stated that they did not receive a notification from HPD about the public meeting and was instead informed by someone living in their building. Tenants noted they had been presented with multiple plans but the project had never started. Both tenants stated that they had not had regular meetings with HPD for years

Members of the Housing Committee voiced serious concerns that during this redevelopment process there be regularly scheduled meetings with onsite and offsite relocated tenants. The Board requests that the buildings' tenants be kept informed throughout the plan development process.

### **MCB4 Requests**

MCB4 approved the concept of demolition and redevelopment of the Site with the following conditions:

1. HPD meet monthly with onsite and offsite tenants to ensure that they are an integral part of the redevelopment of the site.
2. HPD meet regularly with MCB4 and CCBA throughout the redevelopment process to ensure that proposed redevelopment and ULUP will move forward in a timely manner to ensure expedited public review

The Board expects that the next iteration of the proposal for the Site will include:

- Income bands for the proposed units
- Proposed apartment layouts
- Draft building elevations
- Proposed ULURP timeline

The Board also expects that all future proposals will continue to incorporate the community's concerns and priorities.

## Conclusion

MCB4 is pleased the Site will provide much needed affordable housing for low and moderate income households. The Board looks forward to working with you and the developer to improve this prominent block on the corner of West 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. However, considering the extensive delays of this project, the Board requests regularly scheduled meetings or project updates.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin  
MCB4 Chair



[signed 3/13/18]  
Barbara Davis, Co-Chair  
Housing, Health &  
Human Services Committee

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

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senator  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly  
Residents of 201-207 7th Avenue, on location and relocated  
Save Chelsea