

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

June 21, 2021

Marisa Lago, Chair
NYC Department of City Planning
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

**Re: 495 Eleventh Avenue, Slaughterhouse Site
ULURP #C 210324ZMM, 210325ZRM, and 210326PCM**

Dear Chair Lago,

On May 12th, 2021, at Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Clinton / Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee meeting (C/HKLU), 495 Eleventh Avenue Owner Realty LLC ("Developer") and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) made a presentation regarding the above referenced ULURP applications to facilitate the development of 495 Eleventh Avenue (Block 685, Lot 38) ("Proposed Development"), the Slaughterhouse site for development of 350 permanently affordable housing units, including a supportive housing component, a supermarket, an NYPD Special vehicle parking facility, and a 680 room multi-flag hotel.

The public actions through ULURP include¹:

ULURP #C 210324ZMM Zoning Map Amendment

1. To rezone the Proposed Development site from an M1-5 zoning district to a C64 (R10 equivalent).
2. To include the Proposed Development site within the Special Hudson Yards District ("SHYD") as a new Subdistrict G.

¹ [495 Eleventh Ave \(Slaughterhouse\) Zoning Application](#)

ULURP #C 210325ZRM Zoning Text Amendment

1. To modify New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) Section 93-00 to establish a new Subdistrict G within the SHYD.
2. To modify ZR Appendix F, the Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Areas Section, to designate the Proposed Development site as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area.

ULURP #C 210326PCM Combination Acquisition and Site Selection by the City

1. For a site selection and acquisition of 38,971 square feet of the Development Site for use as an NYPD Special vehicle parking facility.

At the May 12th C/HKLU meeting, the Developer also presented their project design, with a two-tower building, one for a hotel, the second for permanently affordable residential housing.

At its June 2nd, 2021, regularly scheduled full board meeting, MCB4 with 46 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, voted to recommend approval, under the following conditions:

1. All affordable housing units must be permanently affordable.
2. Supportive housing must be integrated throughout the development.
3. Commitment from the Developer to work with the Slaughterhouse Plaza Working Group.

MCB4 would also like to commend the Developer for its consistent and tireless efforts of working with the community and the Board to come to a redevelopment plan, creating 350 units of permanently affordable housing, inclusive of 75 units of supportive housing. The Board notes that the Developer has been accommodating and thoughtful in developing multiple iterations of both the program and project design and worked collaboratively with the community to create a successful, financially feasible, and acceptable proposal.

SITE HISTORY

The New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company building was a full block front building on Eleventh Avenue between 39th and 40th Streets, built in two sections – the 39th Street corner in 1903-1905 and the 40th Street corner in 1917. A working slaughterhouse, the New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company was formed by local butchers and provisioners to break the monopoly held by the midwestern beef trust, which dictated meat prices. At that time, with its proximity to water transport as well as to the freight rail yards, the West Side was an important industrial center for the City.

The original six-story Neo-Renaissance style building of steel and masonry was designed by Horgan & Slattery with lower floors faced with limestone and upper floors with dark orange

brick and white terra cotta, with an air of an imposing civic building. But there was no mistaking its purpose: six giant sculptures of rams and steers jutted from the exterior of the sixth floor. An outdoor roof corral for livestock was accessed by a seven-floor ramp visible only from the west. The killing floor was one floor down. The Slaughterhouse remained in operation until the late 1950s. The City took title to the building in 1975 following a lengthy period of unpaid real estate taxes by the owner.

MCB4 EFFORTS TO SECURE THE SITE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In the late 1980, the City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) sought private developers for the Slaughterhouse site. The winning developer proposed full demolition and the redevelopment of the block front as a Visual Merchandising Center, in connection with a newly completed Javits Convention Center. The proposal was opposed by the community board, and eventually did not proceed. After the demise of that proposal, MCB4 urged the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to designate the property as a landmark. The LPC did not act, EDC did not proceed to another Request for Proposal (RFP), and the building continued to deteriorate. EDC then stated that the building was structurally unsound and in danger of eminent collapse. Demolition began 14 months after that point. It took the City 18 months to demolish the building.

Prior to the demolition, MCB4 worked with the LPC to salvage several significant elements of the New York Butcher's Dressed Meat Company, including monumental ram and cow heads, a nearly block-long carved sign, the copper cornice and the building cornerstone. Those items were stored in the LPC's salvage warehouse in Brooklyn from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. The copper cornice was stored under the Williamsburg Bridge on the Brooklyn side, and was found to be missing in the mid-1990s. The result of the demolition was an empty surface lot.

In the late 1990s, NYPD began to use the site for temporary parking. From its demolition in the late 1980s until the early 2000s, there was no plan put forth to develop the site. As part of Hudson Yards rezoning, the site was put forth by MCB4 as an affordable housing site for mitigation of the rezoning. New York City Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) rejected the location as being technically difficult, as two Lincoln Tunnel tubes passed under the site. It was again brought to HPD as part of the Western Railyards rezoning in 2009, as mitigation for the rezoning, and was again rejected.

The Site was identified as a "Proposed Development" site in MCB4's 2014 Affordable Housing Plan, with preliminary analysis identifying the area as a public site for affordable housing development, being able to provide 322 apartments, 100% of which would be affordable to a range of income bands. The Site could, in part, satisfy the City's yet-to-be fulfilled affordable housing commitments in the District, including 150 units from Site M (Tenth Avenue between West 40th and West 41st Streets), which was to be acquired for the #7-line West 41st Street station construction, and 75 units from a proposed sanitation site at 136 West 22nd Street. That station was cut from the #7-line construction, and the site was instead, leased and returned to the developer. Therefore, there was a loss of 150 affordable housing units. The sanitation site at 136

West 22nd Street was converted from an affordable housing use to a park, resulting in the loss of 75 affordable housing units.

In 2015, MCB4 proposed the Slaughterhouse Compromise to Council Member Corey Johnson and the Mayor's Office to transfer the affordable housing commitments from both sites to the Slaughterhouse site. After a series of meetings with the Mayor's Office, HPD, and EDC, an agreement was reached to meet that commitment to create additional affordable housing and for the EDC to issue RFPs.

Those RFPs were issued by the EDC in 2015, Radson Development was designated as the developer in 2017, and it took countless meetings of discussions from 2015 to 2021 in order to bring this project to fruition. MCB4 and multiple project managers at EDC remained committed to the success of this project.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The new building's two towers would contain residential and commercial uses with a total floor area of 581,601 square feet, with a total floor area ratio (FAR) of 23.55. The 56-story hotel tower and the 57-story residential tower would be joined by a 5-story mixed-use podium.

The residential north tower includes:

1. 350 permanently affordable apartments, 75 of which will be supportive housing, for formerly homeless individuals and families, and 2,000 square feet of social service support space. All of the proposed dwelling units will be reserved for households that meet certain income restrictions for affordability, with approximately 71 of the units for households with incomes having an average not exceeding 80% of area medium income (AMI), pursuant to MIH Option 2.
2. A fitness room, lounge, and business center on the 5th floor.
3. 2,000 square feet of exterior recreation space in a north-facing 5th floor terrace.

The commercial south tower includes:

1. 280,000 square feet of hotel use, with 680 guest rooms and accessory eating and drinking establishments, operated under three separate hotel flags.

The base includes:

1. Separate lobbies for both residential and hotel towers.
2. 12,000 square feet supermarket (with 5,000 square feet at grade and 7,000 square feet of floor space in the cellar).
3. 9,000 square feet of office (co-working) space.
4. 39,000 square feet on the 1st to 3rd floors for the NYPD Special vehicle parking facility.

Affordable Housing Program

Program Components

The proposed development includes 275 units of affordable rental housing for income bands between 90% to 165% on the 14th through 57th floors of the north residential tower. It will also include 75 units of supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals and families, for a total of 350 units of affordable housing.

Proposed Project Unit Summary

Unit Size	90-110% AMI Units	155-165% AMI Units	15/15 Units (Supportive Housing)	MIH Units*
Studio	8	14	56	59
One-bedroom	60	106	19	44
Two-bedroom	27	51		11
Three-bedroom	3	5		1
Total	98	176	75	114

*MIH units are layered into 90-165% AMI and 15/15 units.

2021 Area Median Income (AMI) Band Distribution²

AMI Tier	Family of one	Family of Two	Family of Three	Family of Four
90% AMI	\$75,240	\$85,950	\$96,600	\$107,370
110% AMI	\$91,960	\$105,050	\$118,140	\$131,230
165% AMI	\$137,940	\$157,575	\$177,210	\$196,845

2021 New York City Area Affordable Monthly Rents

Unit Size	90% AMI	110% AMI	165% AMI
Studio	\$1,547	\$1,906	\$2,889

² [2021 Area Median Income, NYC HPD](#)

One-bedroom	\$1,942	\$2,390	\$3,621
Two-bedroom	\$2,323	\$2,860	\$4,337

Permanent Affordability

The Board has worked with the City and the Council to ensure all affordable apartments are permanently affordable and approves this proposal only under the condition that all affordable apartments are permanently affordable.

Supportive Housing Program

It was at MCB4’s initiative that the developer and the administration created a supportive housing component at this location. The Hell’s Kitchen community and the Board appreciates its inclusion into this project site.

Nearly 2,000 square feet of social service space on the 5th floor will be included. The social service programming will be delivered by the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS). CUCS has a great record of delivering social services at the Times Square Hotel and Prince George locations, both of which are exceptionally well managed.

The project as currently proposed, segregates the proposed development, which includes 75 units on the 6th through 13th floors in the north residential tower. The Board does not support segregation based upon economic or social service need, and the creation of “poor floors.” As a condition of approval, the Board requests for the supportive housing to be fully integrated throughout the development.

Economic and Demographic Integration

The 5th floor will include a fitness room, lounge, and business center. A north-facing 5th floor terrace will provide 2,000 square feet of exterior recreation space. The hotel cross subsidizes the affordable residential housing development. The shared residential and community facility lobby will be accessible from Eleventh Avenue.

Hotel Program

680 hotel guest rooms are planned on the 1st through 56th floors of the south commercial tower. The hotel entrance will be on Eleventh Avenue and additional doorways will provide secondary access between the hotel and West 39th Street. Approximately 19,000 square feet of amenity space is contemplated, including a 2nd floor restaurant and rooftop bar on the south side of the

south commercial tower, 3rd floor fitness area and lounge, 4th floor ballroom, multi-function space and meeting rooms, and 5th floor lobbies.

The proposed design allows for the creation of a pedestrian walkway to connect the 4th floor mezzanine of the Proposed Development with Javits North. A 4,000 square feet green courtyard on the 5th floor will be accessible to hotel guests. One required loading berth will be provided for the hotel at West 40th Street.

Supermarket Program

A 12,000 square foot supermarket includes 5,000 square feet of space on the first floor and 7,000 gross square feet in the cellar. The supermarket will be accessible from a lobby entrance on West 40th Street. The Developer must be successful in securing a supermarket tenant. The need for additional supermarket space is crucial to the Hell's Kitchen community. In the past, there has been at least two developments that have proposed, but were unable to achieve the integration of supermarkets.

Office Program

The Proposed Development will include 9,000 square feet of office (co-working) space located on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors, accessible from a lobby entrance on West 40th Street.

NYPD Vehicle Storage Facility

Nearly 39,000 square feet of floor space on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors (including 3rd floor mezzanine) will be acquired by the City of New York to accommodate approximately 55 spaces for NYPD Special vehicles. Three larger vehicles will be located at grade and will be arranged in a tandem fashion to minimize the width of the curb cut. The spaces for the vehicles located at grade will be accessed by a 30-foot-wide curb cut on West 40th Street. The 2nd and 3rd floor vehicle storage area will be accessed by a 24 feet wide curb cut on West 40th Street.

The vehicles serve various commands that fall under Patrol Borough Manhattan South, including the NYPD Strategic Response Group and Manhattan South Operations Unit. Specialized NYPD vehicles, including surveillance vehicles and large vans and trucks will be located on the Development Site. Approximately 20 of the 55 vehicles will be oversized specialized vehicles.

The vehicles will be used by the NYPD on an as-needed basis for citywide purposes, and not for routine local or neighborhood policing functions.

All vehicles on the ground floor will be parked in a fully recessed position within the building so they do not obstruct the sidewalk. Gates/doors will be installed across the ground floor entrance bays and will remain closed until vehicular access is needed. Signage, audible signals, and red

lights will provide pedestrians with clear cues as to times when vehicles are expected across the sidewalk.

During construction of the Proposed Development, 35 NYPD sedans assigned to the Manhattan South Operations Unit garage will be temporarily located at 605 West 42nd Street, Block 1090, Lot 23, Manhattan, and 20 large NYPD oversized special vehicles assigned to the Strategic Response Group will be temporarily located in an open lot at 649 West 42nd Street.

Public Parking

There is no proposed public parking on the proposed development due to the multiple constraints on the site, and the public parking restrictions under the Hudson Yards Special District.

Sustainable Features

MCB4 is pleased to note that the Developer will seek to meet the goals of the NYC ZeroWaste guidelines by providing adequate refuse storage and collection space, shared Compactor-Containers for trash and recycling, and by implementing compost removal services (possibly in coordination with the Javits Farm) in the Proposed Development. We are also pleased that the Proposed Development will integrate the requirements of recently enacted laws and best practices, including Local Law 94 (2019) green roofs to mitigate stormwater, the Bird-Safe Building Act and resilience measures to prepare for storms and power outages.

The Developer will seek to achieve LEED Gold certification “with a priority given to credits that are related to NYC policy initiatives including: Energy, Renewable Energy, Recycling, Construction Waste, Stormwater, Material Ingredients & Health. The Proposed Development will also seek to meet the goals of OneNYC and 80x50: exceed Local Law 97 (2019) GHG emissions limits; target Building Letter Grade ‘A’, create a robust, highly insulated exterior envelope with best practices for air-tightness, avoid on-site fossil fuel consumption and anticipate a renewable grid by implementing an all-electric building with electrical systems and equipment.”

PROJECT DESIGN

Rooms With A View

The Developer notes its two-tower design will provide “abundant sunlight and views for residential units” while keeping residential and hotel uses “independent to the greatest degree possible.” In order to open views and allow more daylight penetration, the towers have been stepped: the hotel from east to west and the residential tower from west to east. The amount of façade with unobstructed views to the south has been maximized. Fewer than 25% of units will look directly across to the hotel and these units are provided with oblique views to the river.

The Developer also notes that, by virtue of the low-rise scale of the Javits Center and Javits North, there will be unobstructed views from the building to the south as well as to the west.

Height And Setbacks

The Proposed Development's hotel tower will be approximately 650 feet tall and the residential tower will be approximately 680 feet tall. In order to provide a minimum distance of 60 feet between the towers, the south commercial tower will be set back five feet from West 39th Street.

Public Design Commission

In an October 2019 letter to the New York City Public Design Commission, MCB4 noted that the project's proposed design would add "vibrancy to this newly developing neighborhood" using "materials which relate to the industrial past of the site." The letter also noted that the design "offers the opportunity to meet community needs and comes closer to the project envisioned" by this Board a decade ago.

It should also be stated that the building itself is architecturally distinguished and will provide a handsome, and welcome, addition to the West Side skyline.

The two-tower concept and design are viewed with considerable favor by the community and the Board. We urge the Public Design Commission to give final approval without delay, based on the final design submitted, which the community board has worked diligently with the Developer to come to.

Open Space

Immediately south of the Slaughterhouse site is the proposed Open Space, which has a complex ownership structure. The Site is under the control and management of multiple jurisdictions, including the Port Authority, Javits Center and the NYC Department of Transportation. Part of development site is on the former bed of West 39th Street, de-mapped as part of the Javits Convention Center expansion. Immediately to the south of that is a large historic Lincoln Tunnel building.

As the Lincoln Tunnel ventilation is adjacent to the open space plaza, the Developer notes that a 30-foot-wide portion of West 39th Street must be kept clear for emergency and service access to the Lincoln Tunnel Vent Site. The Developer will seek a revocable consent from the NYC Department of Transportation after the completion of the land use application process to allow pedestrian-oriented improvements within the northern portion of West 39th Street. The Board expects to work with the Developer to ensure these improvements will "significantly enhance the activation of West 39th Street." The Developer notes, and the Board concurs, that while West 40th Street is the only frontage where curb cuts are permitted and service functions must be located along this street, "careful placement of active functions and safety features will be employed for the benefit of pedestrians."

Slaughterhouse Plaza Working Group

The Board had previously seen a preliminary site plan for the proposed Open Space immediately south of the Proposed Development. At that time, the Board urged the Developer to work with MCB4, the Javits Center, Port Authority, and the Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance (BID) to form a Slaughterhouse Plaza Working Group and develop a more integrated and ambitious proposal for the full 60-foot-wide plaza in the former street bed, which is under multiple jurisdictions. Such a proposal would take into account the multiple egress and maintenance easements of both agencies. MCB4 has initiated and will continue to convene those discussions.

Preservation of Architectural Elements

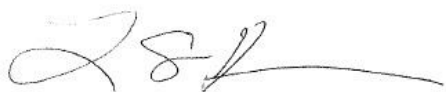
Since 1988, the community has been involved in preserving the Slaughterhouse's architectural elements, which were salvaged by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission for over 20 years. Two elements have been used at the park on 23rd Street, while Clinton Housing Development Company has stored a cow head sculpture and a limestone building sign from the New York Butchers' Dressed Meat Company at 52nd Street. These architectural elements must be worked into the open space plan.

Conclusion

The Proposed Development of the Slaughterhouse site is the result of, not only the decades-long MCB4 advocacy for unleashing the site's potential, but of the last six years of working together with the Developer's team, the Economic Development Corporation, the Speaker's Office, and City Council Land Use. The fact that the Developer has delivered a design concept that will provide hundreds of affordable housing units without public subsidy, a parking solution for NYPD, and a supermarket, all within an architecturally distinguished building, is to be highly commended. We recommend approval of the land use actions necessary for this project to proceed, with the conditions above.

MCB4 thanks the Developer's team for their willingness to address our concerns and its commitment to continue to work with the community and the Board to see this project completed.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



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

Cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. Congress
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly
Hon. Corey Johnson, New York City Council Speaker
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Signe Nielsen, President, Public Design Commission
499 11 Avenue Owner Realty