



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

July 27, 2011

Mathew Wambua
Commissioner
Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

**Re: 560 West 52nd Street
Captain Post
Part of Site 9A on the Clinton Urban Renewal Area
Affordable Housing for Families**

Dear Commissioner Wambua:

At the June 8, 2011 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4's (CB4) Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee, Clinton Housing Development Company¹ (CHDC) presented its updated plans for the development of family-sized housing at 560 West 52nd Street, also known as Captain Post (the "Site"). 560 West 52nd Street is part of Site 9A on the Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA). CB4 has previously expressed its support for this project in letters dated January 4, 2006 and December 11, 2007. CB4 is writing to express its continued support for CHDC's development of the Site as affordable housing for families.

Introduction

The Site consists of 556-560 West 52nd Street. It is located on the south side of West 52nd Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. 556-558 West 52nd Street is a vacant five (5) story commercial loft building with 50 feet of frontage. 560 West 52nd Street is a vacant lot with 25 feet of frontage. The lot is zoned as R8 with Special Clinton District (SCD) Height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) caps, which allow a maximum building height of 66 feet and maximum residential FAR of 4.2. CHDC proposes to renovate the Site into 22 apartments for low income individuals and families. The renovated building will include a common laundry room, rooftop open space, and a community facility in the cellar and ground floor. The adjoining vacant lot at 560 West 52nd Street will be transformed into a community garden of which a fenced pathway will act as the main entrance to the building.

¹ Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC, is also a member of the Board and Co-Chair 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.

History

556-558 West 52nd Street was constructed in 1883 as a five (5) story brick warehouse building. It originally housed the Travers Brothers' twine, cord and hammock factory and was designed by Irish architect and builder, George W. Hughes. Hughes also designed other buildings for the Travers Brothers including a tenement building on West 60th Street in 1885 and a large factory at 518-28 West 52nd Street in 1887-89, both of which have since been demolished. In 1907 the Travers Brothers business failed and in 1909 the building was sold to Robert Wick, a lumber factory owner, who constructed the addition at the rear of the building in 1916. In the next decade, the building moved through several hands until Captain Post Horse Radish & Pickle Co. bought it in 1948, thus earning it the name Captain Post. In 1969, the site was condemned by the City of New York as part of the CURA and it has been owned by the City ever since.

Building Renovation and Layout

Building Renovation

The current building will undergo gut rehabilitation including the construction of new fire stairs and a new elevator. A partial sixth floor will be added and set back from both the north façade and the rear lot line. Entrance to the residential portion of the building will be through the courtyard to the west of the building, adjacent to the community garden. All units will be ADA accessible. The West 52nd Street façade will be fully restored in accordance with the state historic preservation guidelines, including the use of wooden windows, addition of a reconstructed cornice above the ground floor storefront and retention of the existing fire balconies.

Apartment Layouts

This project will produce 22 apartments, distributed as follows:

Type	# of Units
Studio	8
2 bedroom	14

Community Open Space

The vacant lot at 560 West 52nd Street will be converted into a community garden. The lot will have a pathway which serves as the main entrance to the residential building, and the balance of the lot will be a community garden. The garden will be accessible via a key purchased from the CB4 office. CB4 applauds the development of public open space as it is much needed in the community.

Financing

The proposed financing sources include a mortgage provided by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Participation Loan Program (PLP). PLP blends an HPD loan at a rate of 1% with a bank loan in order to provide a below market interest rate. CHDC plans to

partner with the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) for the bank loan. The balance of the project financing will be equity from Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits. 556-558 West 52nd was identified as a historic resource in the Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) for the 11th Avenue Rezoning. CHDC is pursuing registration of the building on the State and National Registers of Historic Places with historic consultant, Higgins and Quasebarth.

Housing Program

Population Served

Low income families and individuals, those at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Income Limits

The following are the 2010 Income Limits for 80% AMI:

Household Size	Maximum Income
1	\$38,016
2	\$47,520
3	\$57,024
4	\$65,894

Proposed Rents and Affordability

Rents will be based on HPD’s PLP Maximum Rent guidelines. The following table shows 2010 Rent limits with cooking gas included:

Unit Type	Rent
Studio	\$898
2 bedroom	\$1,371

Apartment Mix and Distribution

The following table represents the proposed unit counts and distribution:

Unit Type	# of Units	% of Units	Sq. Ft. Range
Studio	8	36%	256 - 302 Sq. Ft.
2 bed	14	64%	722 - 930 Sq. Ft.
Total	22		

CB4 is pleased to offer its continued support to this project. Affordable housing in units large enough for families is badly needed in the community and CB4 is pleased that CHDC is developing one of the last remaining CURA sites. CB4 look forward to engaging with the project as it moves ahead.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson, Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Elisa Gerontianos, Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Local Electeds
R. Visnauskas – HPD
B. De la Torre – HPD
T. Walters – HPD
S. Levenson – HPD
T. O'Hanlon – HPD