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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

May 26, 2015

**Recommendation on  
ULURP Application Nos. C 150203 MMM and N 150237 ZRM – 76 Greenwich Avenue  
By West Village Residences LLC & New York City Department of Parks and Recreation**

**PROPOSED ACTION**

West Village Residences LLC and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (“the applicants”) are seeking an amendment to the City Map pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter to establish a park at 76 Greenwich Avenue, also known as the Triangle Site, on Block 607, Lot 1 within the Greenwich Village Historic District in Manhattan Community District 2. In order to facilitate this mapping, the applicants also seek approval for a minor modification to the existing Restrictive Declaration recorded as part of the 2012 approval of the West Village Residences Large Scale General Development (“LSGD”) and a related text amendment to the City of New York Zoning Resolution.

A city map change is subject to the city’s Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and as such, shall be reviewed by the Borough President and a recommendation issued based on the interests of the people in the Borough. In addition, the Office of the Borough President has the responsibility to ensure the technical accuracy of such map prior to certification into public review.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicants propose to map the Triangle Site at 76 Greenwich Avenue as parkland to ensure public enjoyment and access in perpetuity of the open space, approximately 16,677 square feet. The site was originally designed as required open space as part of the 2012 LSGD, and through the ULURP process, a portion of the site was devoted as square footage for an AIDS Memorial, which went through a separate, public design process. The final design is for two complementary parks that will be under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) as a result of the requested mapping action. The AIDS Memorial will occupy approximately 1,575 square feet at the western point at the intersection of West 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Greenwich Avenue. The memorial area is marked by granite paving stones arranged in concentric rings, stone ledge seating, and a canopy structure. The stones will be engraved with poetry, facts, and quotes about the Villages’ and St. Vincent’s Hospital’s, response to the AIDS epidemic. The remainder of the Triangle Site is proposed to have paved paths, planting beds, seating, a water feature, and commemorative pavers linking the site to its history as St. Vincent’s Hospital. This portion of the site is enclosed by a decorative fence with multiple entrances.

## **Area Context**

The Triangle Site at 76 Greenwich Avenue (Block 607, Lot 1) is bordered by West 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Seventh Avenue to the east and Greenwich Avenue to the southwest and the site is approximately a 16,677 square foot parcel. A portion of this parcel will include the New York City AIDS Memorial. The entirety of the parcel would be mapped parkland and construction of the park has already begun. The project site is located in a C2-7 zoning district in the Greenwich Village Historic District Community District 2, Manhattan. The Greenwich Village Historic District was designated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) in 1969 and is known for its irregular shaped blocks and having the greatest concentration of the earliest residential architecture in the City.

The neighborhood is a mix of commercial and residential uses and is predominately characterized by townhouses and mid-rise buildings. Greenwich Avenue is mostly residential, three to six stories, with ground floor retail uses. There is additional ground floor retail along the wide streets and taller buildings, 20 stories, along the avenues. The surrounding zoning districts include C1-6 northwest of the site, R6 southwest of the site, C2-6 south and north of the site and R8 east of the site. The area is served well by mass transit with the 1/2/3 trains one block northeast of the site, F/M and PATH trains two blocks northeast of the site, and the L train two blocks northwest. The M20 bus runs south along Seventh Avenue and the M7 and M14 buses run along West 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Citibike bicycle stations are also within close proximity of the site.

## **Background**

Saint Vincent's Hospital began its operations in the West Village in 1849 and expanded its campus to the East Site, the Triangle Site and the O'Toole Building located along Seventh Avenue between West 11<sup>th</sup> and West 13<sup>th</sup> Streets. In 1979, these three sites were designated as a Large Scale Community Facility Development. The designation facilitated the development of the Coleman and Link Pavilions in the 1980s.

In 2009, Saint Vincent's Hospital put forth a plan to construct a new 19-story acute care hospital and emergency department at the O'Toole Building Site. The 2009 plan proposed the demolition of four of the eight buildings on the East Site for a primarily residential development, as well as the demolition of the O'Toole Building to allow for the development of a new acute hospital center which was approved by the LPC. However, in 2010 Saint Vincent's Hospital declared bankruptcy and in 2011, the campus was sold to facilitate a mixed-use development on the East Site.

In March 2012, the CPC approved an application by St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Centers and West Villages Residences LLC for a zoning map amendment, zoning text amendment and several special permits for a Large Scale General Development encompassing two parcels of land, the East and Triangle Sites, to facilitate the reuse and redevelopment of the former Saint Vincent's Hospital campus. The project was for a 92,925 square foot mixed-use development with approximately 450 market-rate residential units, ground-floor retail, medical office space, a 152-space parking facility on the East Site and a 16,667 square foot private, publicly-accessible open space on the Triangle Site. The Triangle Site component included the demolition of the

Materials Handling Facility, gas facility and the raised landscaped portion of the site. West Villages Residences LLC agreed, in conjunction with the approval, to pursue two actions: (a) to allow a memorial for the AIDS/HIV epidemic on the Triangle site; (b) a city map and text amendments to allow the private, publicly-accessed open space to become a formal public park owned by the City. In September of 2014, the CPC approved the first modification to the Restrictive Declaration to incorporate the New York City AIDS/HIV Memorial into the Triangle Site plan.

### **Proposed Actions**

As described in the application materials, the applicant seeks an amendment to the City Map, a zoning text amendment to Sections 74-741, 74-742 and 74-743 of the Zoning Resolution, and a minor modification to the LSGD Restrictive Declaration. These actions will facilitate mapping the open space as parkland and subsequent conveyance of the park to the City by modifying the LSGD open space requirements and modification of the Restrictive Declaration to address the site ownership and the impact the park mapping will have on the LSGD zoning calculations and drawings. The proposal would not alter the design of the open space.

The amendment to the City Map will establish a park within the area bounded by Seventh Avenue, Greenwich Avenue, and West 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The mapping action will also allow for the modification of block dimensions and legal grades necessitated by this change.

The text amendment is comprised of three changes to the Zoning Resolution. First, the applicant seeks a modification to ZR § 74-741 to only show the applicable portion of LSGD on the site plan when applying for a special permit. Second, the applicant seeks an amendment to ZR § 74-742 to include a new section (e) which incorporates ownership requirements for modifications relating to the mapping of open space as a park and its subsequent conveyance to the City. Finally, the applicant seeks an amendment to ZR § 74-743 to reduce the open space requirement for a large-scale general development previously approved by the City Planning Commission within Manhattan Community District 2, within the former Washington Square Southeast Urban Renewal Area in the event that the open space improved as part of the LSGD is later mapped as parkland and conveyed to the City. Given these geographic restrictions, the text currently only applies to the subject LSGD and Triangle Site.

The minor modification to the Restrictive Declaration is a City Planning Commission vote to approve changes to the original declaration recorded as part of the 2012 LSGD approvals. The changes include removal of all park approved plans as an exhibit to reflect the change in ownership of the Triangle Site and the revision of LSGD site plan and zoning calculations subsequent to the Triangle Site's mapping and acquisition by the City.

### **COMMUNITY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

At its Full Board meeting on April 23, 2015, Manhattan Community Board 2 (“CB2”) recommended approval with no conditions of this application. The vote was unanimous and the recommendation was submitted to the Department of City Planning on April 24, 2015.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

The request for a city map change and related text amendments are appropriate and reflect the interests of the residents of the Borough of Manhattan. This proposal is the direct result of impassioned community input during the 2012 ULURP process. The public, the community board, the Borough President, and the City Council insisted that an AIDS Memorial be incorporated into the design of the Triangle Site and that the LSGD be revised to ensure an open and public park in perpetuity. The application addresses those conditions.

To ensure the long term interests of the Borough and its residents, one must also look forward to how the Triangle Site will be operated and maintained. Significant discussion and time was spent to ensure a superior quality and design for the open space. Since CB2 is lacking in open space, given its population density, it was imperative that the design of the Triangle Site allow for passive respite and a visual, landscaped break from the built environment. A significant part of the design was the center planting bed and water feature, the decorative fence, and the curvature of the beds and paths around the perimeter of the parcel. This quality and the design intent should not be diminished over time. There is confidence that the space will be well maintained, as the DPR is responsible for capital improvements and the developer for the remainder of the LSGD is responsible for all maintenance obligations.

At the time of certification, the alteration map included a note to allow DPR to construct small structures such as kiosks, comfort stations and sheds. These small structures would be subject to Public Design Commission approval. However, it is believed that kiosks and comfort stations by their very programmatic and footprint needs would potentially be disruptive to the design intent of the space, and that the alteration map is not the appropriate place to convey implicit approval for these structures. It is greatly appreciated that the applicants understood this concern and after discussion with City Planning's Chief Engineer and the applicants, the note will be revised to eliminate kiosks and comfort stations, while providing DPR the flexibility it needs for long-term improvements and maintenance of the Triangle Site.

The application for the City Map change, a text amendment and the related minor modification to the Restrictive Declaration, represent a significant step toward the completion and provision of open space and the Memorial. As a City Councilmember, I was proud to support the need for an AIDS/HIV Memorial at this site given the care so many received at St. Vincent's Memorial Hospital and the importance of the LGBTQ community in Greenwich Village. As Borough President, I have continued my support by providing funds for the construction of the AIDS memorial and believe this proposal is appropriate.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

**Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends approval of ULURP Application No. C 150203 MMM and the related text amendment Application No. N 150237 ZRM.**



Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President