



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f
431 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f
www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov

Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

August 31, 2017

**Recommendation on ULURP Application C 160207 PQM – Escuela Hispana Montessori 2
By Administration for Children’s Services and the Department of Citywide Administrative
Services**

PROPOSED ACTION

The City of New York Administration for Children’s Services (“ACS”) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (“DCAS”) (“the applicants”) seek the acquisition of property in order to continue a childcare center located within a privately owned commercial building located at 180 Suffolk Street (Block 350, Lot 8) in an R7-A and R7-B zoning district in the Lower East Side, Community District 3, Borough of Manhattan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) are proposing their continued occupancy of 31,498 square feet, including two rooftop play areas, a ground level playing area and cellar space, in a privately owned building located at 180 Suffolk Street for Escuela Hispana Montessori 2, a child care center. The child care center is the sole tenant of the four-story building.

Through the Department of Health, the Escuela Hispana Montessori 2 serves 174 children between the ages of 2 and 5 years old Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The child care services include nutritious meal times, supervised playtime, and education guided by the Modern and Creative Curriculum Gold Version 5.

Background

The privately-owned building was constructed in 1926. In 1973, it became occupied by the ACS’s predecessor, NYC Human Resource Administration, as a daycare center. In 1991, an acquisition ULURP application was filed for continued use as the Puerto Rican Council Day Care Center. Manhattan Community Board Three (“CB3”)’s Executive Committee and the Manhattan Borough President, Ruth Messinger, recommended approval of the application. On October 21, 1992 the application was approved by the City Planning Commission (“CPC”) for an unlimited period “if the site is acquired in fee” or for a period of 20 years if it is not; this lease expired in 2012. At the time of the 1992 approval, CPC raised concerns regarding the physical condition and continued maintenance of the day care center. HRA submitted a summary of the work required to upgrade the building which the landlord had to comply with as part of the Mayor’s Lease Renewal Upgrade Program. The Puerto Rican Council Day Care Center closed

due to the city's budget cuts in 2010 along with 15 other subsidized day care centers operated by ACS.

In a meeting with my office, the representatives from ACS and DCAS stated that they are requesting approval for continued use of the building for an unstated term in order to have flexibility in the event they are able to purchase the building. However, they informed our office that at this time, the building owner is only willing to pursue a 10 year lease.

Area Context

The predominant surrounding land use is mixed commercial and residential buildings primarily along the north side of East Houston Street and the east and west sides of Clinton Street. Most of the surrounding buildings range between three and six stories in height. The site block consists of two artist studios, four restaurants, a dessert bar, two cafes, a cigar shop, clothing store and a laundromat. The east side of the block and a portion of the building are within a commercial overlay area where the majority of the food establishments are located. Less than two blocks east of the site is ABC Playground which has variety of playground equipment for children and basketball courts.

The site is located just north of the Williamsburg Bridge entrance and east of the FDR Drive. The site is also well served by multiple modes of public transportation. The M9 and M21 bus line route stops are located north of site on East Houston Street; the J, Z and M subway lines are at the Essex Street Station located two and a half blocks east of the site; and the F subway line's Delancey Street stop is located two and half blocks south of the site. There is a Citibike station at the end of the block near the intersection of Suffolk and Stanton Streets.

COMMUNITY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At its Land Use Committee meeting on June 14, 2017, Manhattan Community Board 3 (CB3) voted to approve the application under the condition that the Escuela Montessori 2 maintains continued use of the building as a daycare center. CB3 further stated that the administration, DCAS and ACS should explore ways to preserve affordable child care and consider longer leases for childcare facilities and as well as purchasing property for the daycare centers.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

This location has been used as a day care center since 1973. These types of community facilities are important to the neighborhoods they serve. This is especially the case in this community which has lost several such facilities over the last few years due to the proliferation and pressure for commercial uses. It is critical to ensure stability and longevity for these necessary community resources.

During a walk-thru of the facility by my staff, we learned that nearby construction has resulted in the parking of additional vehicles on this block, blocking entrance and egress to the daycare center. Children who disembark from the daycare's school buses are forced into the street and

exposed to danger from oncoming traffic. The center has requested a designated “No Parking During School Hours” zone to allow safe onboarding and disembarking of children and to permit bus parking during business hours. My office will work with the school and the Department of Transportation to fulfill this request and I recommend that the City Planning Commission, coordinating on behalf of ACS and DCAS, do the same. Additionally, with the approval of this renewal, the center will be able to use funding to replace the rubber roof tiles with a quick-drying roof. This will ensure children can continue to play in the facility’s three playgrounds.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends approval of ULURP Application No. C 160207 PQM.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President