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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

August 14, 2017

**Recommendation on
ULURP Application No. C 170249 ZSM – 220 Central Park South
by VNO 225 West 58th Street LLC**

PROPOSED ACTIONS

VNO 225 West 58th Street LLC (the “applicant”) seeks approval of a **special permit** pursuant to Section 13-45 and Section 13-451 of the Zoning Resolution (ZR) to allow an attended off-street parking garage with a maximum capacity of 64 spaces on portions of the ground floor and subcellar of a proposed mixed-use building at 220 Central Park South (Block 1030, Lots 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 25, 39, 46, 48, and 58) in R10H and C5-1 Districts of Manhattan Community District 5.

The special permit requires that all of the applicable conditions of ZR § 13-20 (SPECIAL RULES FOR MANHATTAN CORE PARKING FACILITIES) be met and that the findings of §13-45 and 13-451 have been met. These findings are as follows:

- (1) the location of the vehicular entrances and exits to such parking facility will not unduly interrupt the flow of pedestrian traffic associated with uses or public facilities, including access points to mass transit facilities in close proximity thereto, or result in any undue conflict between pedestrian and vehicular movements, due to the entering and leaving movement of vehicles;
- (2) the location of the vehicular entrances and exits to such parking facility will not interfere with the efficient functioning of streets, including any lanes designated for specific types of users or vehicles, due to the entering and leaving movement of vehicles;
- (3) such use will not create or contribute to serious traffic congestion and will not unduly inhibit surface traffic and pedestrian flow;
- (4) for public parking garages, that where any floor space is exempted from the definition of floor area, such additional floor space is needed in order to prevent excessive on-street parking demand and relieve traffic congestion;
- (5) such parking facility will not be inconsistent with the character of the existing streetscape; and
- (6) the number of off-street parking spaces in such proposed parking facility is reasonable and not excessive in relation to recent trends in close proximity to the proposed facility with regard to:
 - (a) the increase in the number of dwelling units; and

- (b) the number of both public and accessory off-street parking spaces, taking into account both the construction, if any, of new off-street parking facilities and the reduction, if any, in the number of such spaces in existing parking facilities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project site is a 27,608 square foot irregularly-shaped mid-block through-lot located between Central Park South and West 58th Street. The site has 75 feet of frontage on Central Park South and 200 feet of frontage on West 58th Street, and is part of a merged zoning lot that together total 91,704 square feet. The applicant is seeking a special permit pursuant to ZR § 13-45 and 13-451 to build an accessory parking garage with a maximum of 64 spaces in a proposed mixed-use building. The project site had previously been occupied by two residential buildings, an apartment hotel, a commercial building, and a public parking garage. All of these buildings have since been demolished.

Background

The project site is just north of the Special Midtown District, which was enacted in 1982 with the general goal of strengthening the business core of Midtown Manhattan. The northerly boundary of the Special Midtown District is midblock between West 57th Street and West 58th Street. The project site is just outside of this special district and is governed by the underlying regulations of the C5-1 and R10H districts. The southern portion is zoned C5-1 and makes up approximately 73 percent of the site's lot area, while the northern portion is zoned R10H and makes up approximately 27 percent.

Proposed Development

The applicant proposes to construct a new 66-story mixed-use building with approximately 472,500 square feet of floor area and 118 market-rate condominium dwelling units, and a 64-space attended accessory parking facility on the ground floor and sub cellar level 2. The proposed building complies with all use and bulk regulations, but the proposed accessory parking facility requires a special permit, as the building could include only 24 accessory parking spaces as-of-right.

Entrances to the proposed building, the garage, and the retail component will be on West 58th Street, with a secondary entrance to the residential units from Central Park South. There will be two 22-foot-wide curb cuts, separated by approximately 129 feet. The western curb cut will serve the proposed garage, while the eastern curb cut will serve the motor court, which is an off-street drop off area for the residential entrances.

The ground floor level of the proposed garage will occupy approximately 3,425 square feet, with six reservoir spaces and two car elevators. The portion of the garage on sub cellar level 2 will occupy approximately 11,830 square feet, with 64 spaces including 7 double-height stackers. Upon entering the garage traveling eastbound on West 58th Street, garage patrons will go through

a two-lane driveway until they reach the reservoir spaces, where they will leave their vehicles with a parking attendant.

Area Context

The project site is located in a R10H zoning district and a C5-1 zoning district in Manhattan Community District 5, between West 58th Street and West 59th Street and adjacent to Columbus Circle. Central Park is located just north of the project site. The surrounding area also includes many cultural resources, such as Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet, the New York City Center, and Carnegie Hall.

Land uses in the area include commercial, mixed residential and commercial, multifamily residential, park space and institutional uses. The area has seen tremendous growth in high-rise luxury residential development in the last ten years, as many sites have been assembled through zoning-lot mergers and air-rights transfers.

Adjacent properties on the same block as the proposed development include multifamily elevator buildings and other mixed-use buildings ranging from 8 stories to 35 stories. Three landmarked buildings occupy the same zoning lot as the project site: 240 Central Park South Apartments, Gainsborough Studios, and the Former Helen Miller Gould Stable. Other buildings of historical and architectural significance on the same block include Engine Company Number 23 and the Sire Building. In total, there are 13 designated NYC Landmarks and the Central Park Scenic Landmark within the Study Area of the application.

The Columbus Circle Subway Station, serving the A, B, C, D, and 1 subway lines, is the closest station to the project site and a major transportation node for the entire city. Columbus Circle also provides access to multiple bus lines, including the M12, the M20, the M104, the M31, the M57, the M10, and the M7. There is also convenient access to the 57th Street—Seventh Avenue Station for the N, Q, R, and W lines. Citibike stations are also located nearby along Broadway at West 60th Street and West 58th Street,

Proposed Actions

The applicant seeks a Parking Special Permit pursuant to ZR § 13-45 and 13-451 to allow additional accessory parking spaces for residential growth in order to construct a 64-space accessory residential parking garage. Only 24 spaces are permitted as-of-right for the proposed building.

COMMUNITY BOARD RECOMMENDATION

At its Full Board meeting on July 13, 2017, Manhattan Community Board 5 (CB5) approved a resolution recommending **approval** of the application for a special permit to allow a 64-space accessory parking garage. CB5's recommendation expressed that the applicant submitted studies according to the methodology set out by the Department of City Planning, and showed that the

proposed garage would not have significant adverse impacts to the surrounding area. In addition, CB5's recommendation noted that the previous parking garage located on the premises of the project site contained 173 parking spaces and 3 curb cuts, and that the proposed garage would represent an overall reduction of the amount of parking spaces and curb cuts. CB5 also called out the proposed motor court as a way to accommodate taxi and car service to prevent idling traffic in the area and on local through streets.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

The Borough President's Office has consistently called on the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission to consider a more robust set of factors in the parking methodology analysis. In particular, recommendations from this office on prior parking special permits have stressed the importance of considering the utilization rate of parking facilities prior to the ten-year look-back period. Without this data, there is doubt over the suitability of the ten-year look-back period as a benchmark for the appropriate number of parking spaces for a neighborhood today.

This office also believes that proximity to mass transit should be a major consideration of the parking methodology. In this case, the project site is well-served by public transportation; Columbus Circle is one of the major transportation nodes of the city, with ample access to subway and bus service. Given this location, and considering the existing congestion of the surrounding area, this office is generally reluctant to recommend approval of additional parking spaces. However, we also recognize that there are different profiles for car users, and that parking spaces can serve as storage for destination-based car usage that go beyond the reach of the public transportation system, as opposed to everyday commuting within the city. While Columbus Circle provides ready access to the subway and bus system, the project site does not enjoy easy access to multiple regional transportation systems, as do some other parking special permit project sites that have come before this office. Thus, it seems to be an appropriate location for light destination-based car storage and usage.

This office has also established limited comfort with the notion that residents and owners tend not to use their cars on a regular basis, as opposed to commuters and other transient parking users. We acknowledge the point raised by CB5 that going from a public parking garage with 173 spaces to a residential parking garage with 64 spaces might well represent a net reduction in car usage and congestion.

The applicant meets the individual findings for a special permit pursuant to ZR §13-45 and 13-451. Our office believes that the 40 additional parking spaces would not unduly interrupt the flow of pedestrian traffic, result in any undue conflict between pedestrian and vehicular movements, interfere with the functioning of streets, create serious congestion, or otherwise substantially impact the neighborhood. Based on these findings, our office recommends approval of the special permit. However, we once again urge the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission to reconsider the parking calculation methodology to include a more robust set of factors.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends **approval** of ULURP Application No. C 170249 ZSM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "A".

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President