

Borough President Recommendation

City Planning Commission
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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representative as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

Applications: N 190205 ZRM

Docket Description:

IN THE MATTER OF Special permit pursuant to 13-45 and 13-451 for a 180 space accessory parking garage.

COMMUNITY BOARD NO:

4

BOROUGH: Manhattan

RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS (List below)
- DISAPPROVE
- DISAPPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITONS (Listed below)

EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION – MODIFICATION/CONDITIONS (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

See Attached

John A. Brewer

April 15, 2019

BOROUGH PRESIDENT

DATE



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

April 15, 2019

**Recommendation on ULURP Application C 190213 ZSM
515 West 18th Street Parking Garage
By Related Companies**

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Related Companies (the “Applicant”) is seeking a Special Permit to build a 180 space parking garage pursuant to ZR § 13-45 of the Zoning Resolution. The Special Permit would apply to the Applicant’s proposed 21-story mixed use building located at 515 West 18th Street, which is located in Subareas E and G in the Special West Chelsea District of Community District 4 (the “Proposed Building”).

In evaluating the Special Permit application for an accessory off-street parking garage, the City Planning Commission must find that¹:

- “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; and
5. such parking facility will not be inconsistent with the character of the existing streetscape.”

BACKGROUND

The Special West Chelsea District was created in 2005 with the purpose of encouraging development while also ensuring that it is responsive to the neighborhood context and needs. That action has been particularly successful in incentivizing the construction of residential buildings in the area, which once contained many manufacturing uses and vacant or

¹ ZR § 13-45 (c); the fourth finding is only applicable to public parking garages.

underdeveloped lots. The table below includes some of the major developments that have come online since that 2005 rezoning:

Large-Scale Residential Developments Following West Chelsea Rezoning

Street Address	Total Residential Units
450 West 17 th Street	469
76 11 th Avenue	310
500 West 23 rd Street	111
507 West 28 th Street	372
525 West 28 th Street	710
312 11 th Avenue	369

2,341

Like several recent developments in the West Chelsea neighborhood, the Proposed Building sits on what was formerly a surface parking lot primarily serving transient users.

ZR § 13-10 allows the following number of parking spaces for accessory off-street parking garages for residential developments or enlargements in Community Boards 1 through 6:

- 1 parking space for every 5 residential units
- 1 parking space for every 4,000 square feet of office or retail use

In 2013, the City Council approved the Manhattan Core Text Amendment, which made changes to the parking garage requirements in the Manhattan Core. The Core was defined as Manhattan Community Boards 1 through 8 (below 96th Street on the east side and below 110th Street on the west side). The Text Amendment requires that accessory off-street parking facilities that exceed the number of parking spaces allowable under ZR § 13-10 obtain a Special Permit from the City Planning Commission. The process and findings for obtaining such a permit are outlined in ZR § 13-45. As part of the application process, the applicant is required to undertake a ten year look-back analysis of the net change in parking spaces as well as the net change in residential units.

PROPOSED BUILDING

The Proposed Building sits on a site that is intersected by the High Line and is zoned C6-4. The portion of the building that is to the east of the High Line and fronts on 10th Avenue will be 10 stories in height. The portion to the west of the High Line will rise to 10 stories along West 19th Street and 21 stories along West 18th Street. Both portions of the building will share the same mechanical equipment. The building will contain 181 residential units and 18,000 square feet of office and retail uses.

The site is a Brownfield site and is also located within the flood zone.

Proposed Parking Garage and Residential Growth Parking Study Analysis

Pursuant to ZR § 13-10, the Proposed Building is allowed an as-of-right accessory parking garage that contains 41 parking spaces. ZR § 13-14 allows the Proposed Building to have a garage with up to 181 parking spaces via a Special Permit from the City Planning Commission.

The Applicant proposes to build a parking garage that will be located entirely within the cellar of the Proposed Building. The parking garage would have a single entrance on West 18th Street and would reduce the number of curb cuts on the site from five to one. The Applicant will also be required to provide 18 bike parking spaces².

The Applicant was required to complete an analysis of the residential growth and available parking spaces. That analysis, which was limited to a study area of a one-third mile radius around the Proposed Building and a timeframe from 2007 through 2020, found a net increase of 2,101 residential units. During that same period, the study area saw an increase of 67 off-street parking spaces.

The Applicant expects that residents will use 80 to 100 of the 180 proposed parking spaces. They have also stated that the parking spaces that are not purchased or rented by residents of the Proposed Building will be available to other area residents.

Area Context

The Proposed Building sits on a block directly to the east of the Hudson River and is located in Subareas E and G of the Special West Chelsea District, within a C6-2 commercial zoning district. Directly to the west of the Proposed Building are the offices of the Inter Active Corporation, which are housed in a building designed by architect Frank Gehry.

The broader area around the Proposed Building has seen a dramatic increase in residential development following the 2005 rezoning but also contains art galleries and other attractions that draw people from outside the West Chelsea neighborhood. Chelsea Piers is located one block to the west of the Proposed Building, on 11th Avenue. Additionally, two major open space resources are in close proximity to the Proposed Building, including the High Line, which has a staircase entrance on West 18th Street, to the south of the Proposed Building. A portion of the High Line also runs in between the eastern and western portions of the building. The Hudson River Park Esplanade is also located on 11th Avenue, one block to the west of the Proposed Building.

The area is well-served by public transit. In addition to the 14th Street Station that connects to the A, C, E, and L Subway lines, the site is near the M11 bus route that runs north and south on 9th and 10th Avenues, the M12 bus route, which runs north and south on 11th and 12th Avenues, and the M14 bus, which provides crosstown service on 14th Street.

² New York City Administrative Code § 20-327: Bicycle Parking Spaces.

COMMUNITY BOARD RESOLUTION

On March 6, 2019, Manhattan Community Board 4 voted to recommend denial of the Special Permit application. In its resolution, the Board stated that “the test determining eligibility for the special permit is seriously flawed and inapplicable to West Chelsea.” The Board also noted that the proposed parking garage would cause congestion along West 18th Street, which sees significant pedestrian flow to and from the High Line and the Hudson River Park Esplanade. Lastly, the Board raised concerns about the parking spaces that would not be used by residents of the Proposed Building, which they argued could incentivize transient users.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS

While the study area has seen a reduction of parking spaces since 2007, the majority of the spaces that have been lost were used by transient users in a time when the area did not have many residential buildings. Additionally, the Applicant’s own analysis shows that residents of the Proposed Building will only use a portion of the parking spaces, about 80 to 100. I share the Community Board’s concerns that any parking spaces not used by residents will invite transient car users.

I recommend that the Applicant include parking spaces for car sharing vehicles. ZR § 13-16 allows car sharing vehicles to occupy up to 20 percent of the parking spaces in accessory off-street parking facilities. In this instance, 36 of the 180 proposed parking spaces would be dedicated to car sharing vehicles. The Applicant should provide all 36 of those spaces. Car sharing options not only reduce the need to purchase a private car, but also serve as an amenity for residents.

Additionally, I believe there may be an opportunity to provide parking spaces for some nearby institutions. 495 11th Avenue in particular, is used by the NYPD for parking but is slated to be redeveloped into affordable housing. The DEA also has an office two blocks to the south of the Proposed Building. I recommend that the Applicant explore opportunities to provide parking for these and other institutions in the area. A plan to provide any such parking spaces must also be done in consultation with Manhattan Community Board 4 to ensure that potential impacts to areas beyond the Project Building are identified and addressed.

I also believe that bike parking should be made affordable in order to ensure that the policy of incentivizing bike usage actually works in practice. The Proposed Building is one block away from the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, which provides north/south access. Crosstown bike lanes are available on West 20th and West 21st Streets while 9th Avenue also has a southbound bike lane. Fostering bike usage is an impactful way to address congestion on our streets and the Applicant should endeavor to not only provide the required bike parking spaces, but also encourage their usage. I hope that the DOT will take the opportunity to place Citibike stations nearby.

I think that parking garages incentivize private car ownership, including in areas that are well-served by public transit. Additionally, congestion from vehicles has adverse effects on safety, quality of life, and character of neighborhoods throughout the city.

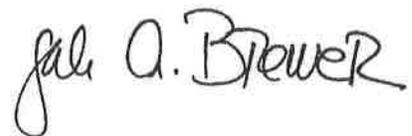
There are efforts to reduce congestion—the most recent of which is congestion pricing for Manhattan. While the details are still being worked out by the Traffic Mobility Review Panel, one thing is for sure: there will be a toll for vehicles that are in areas south of 60th Street in Manhattan. Our society has been moving toward a trend that values quality public transit and safer, more enjoyable streets over private car ownership. Legislation is increasingly reflecting those values; our planning efforts should do the same.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

I therefore recommend **disapproval** of application No. C 190213 ZSM **unless the conditions below are met:**

1. That the Applicant allot 36 of the proposed parking spaces for car rental or car sharing vehicles;
2. That the Applicant work with nearby institutions to identify their need for parking and rent such spaces to those institutions as appropriate and in consultation with the Community Board; and
3. That the Applicant provide bike parking spaces at an affordable rate and ensure that the spaces are being used

I furthermore recommend that **if the Applicant does not meet my first two conditions, the number of parking spaces be reduced to 100.**



Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President