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Mark Levine, Borough President

August 7, 2024

**Recommendation on ULURP Application No. C240201ZSM
10 Rockefeller Center Hotel Special Permit
By Little Nell Big Apple LLC**

PROPOSED ACTION

Little Nell Big Apple LLC (the “Applicant”) is seeking a hotel special permit for 10 Rockefeller Center (Manhattan Block 1264, Lot 5) to facilitate the conversion of portions of an existing building from office use (Use Group 7) to hotel (Use Group 5), pursuant to Zoning Resolution Sections 32-153 and 74-152. The hotel would contain 136 rooms and be located on the cellar, subcellar, and 7th – 16th floors of the existing building.

BACKGROUND

The existing building currently contains a 17-story, approximately 550,750 gross square foot commercial building that was built in 1939. Current uses include the Nintendo store and studios for the Today Show, which are located on floors one through six, vacant office space on the 7th – 16th floors, and mechanical space on the 17th floor. In the cellar and subcellar floors are mechanical, parking, and storage facilities. The proposed development would occupy the cellar and subcellar areas, as well as the vacant office space on floors 7–16. To facilitate a change in use from office to hotel, a special permit is required. The proposed site did not contain a Use Group 5 hotel as of December 9, 2021.

Proposed Development

The Applicant proposes to convert the lowest levels and portions of the upper floors of the site from office to hotel use. The hotel’s main entrance would be located on West 48th Street between Avenue of the Americas and Rockefeller Plaza. The Applicant would also apply to obtain the Department of Transportation’s approval for a hotel drop-off zone on West 48th Street, in front of the main entrance. The hotel lobby would include check-in, a reception desk, waiting area, and two elevators that would exclusively serve the hotel floors. The seventh and eighth floors would feature amenities including a lounge, library, fitness center, restaurant, and spa. Guest rooms would be located on the 9th – 16th floors, with 15-18 rooms per floor, totaling 136 rooms. Mechanical equipment would be located on a portion of the 16th floor, as well as in the cellar and subcellar levels. The rest of the cellar would serve the hotel, and the subcellar would provide loading dock access.

Area Context

The development site is located in Rockefeller Plaza, a landmark commercial complex consisting of 19 buildings and public open spaces. The site falls within the Special Midtown District, which

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neighbors the Special Midtown District Theater Subdistrict. The Special Midtown District was established in 1982 with the goals of strengthening the business core of Midtown Manhattan, stabilizing development in the area, and preserving the architectural and historical character of the area. The area is characterized by dense, commercial office buildings, mixed residential buildings, and retail uses. A 33-story Kimpton Hotel is proposed across the street from the proposed development. There are many hotels in the surrounding area, including three hotels located two blocks to the north on 51st Street and approximately 18 hotels to the west between 49th and 44th Streets and 6th and 7th Avenues. Other hotels are located throughout the Midtown area, with tourists being drawn to nearby attractions including Times Square, the theater district, retail on 5th Avenue, and more. The area is well served by public transit, including the 47-50 Street-Rockefeller Center B, D, F and M trains at 48th Street and 6th Avenue, Grand Central Terminal located at 42nd Street and Park Avenue, and 10 bus lines in close proximity.

COMMUNITY BOARD RESOLUTION

On July 11, 2024, Manhattan Community Board 5 voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Tourists have been coming back to the city in droves. In May, State Comptroller DiNapoli published data that domestic visitors increased 7% from 2022 to 2023, while international visitors increased 23.4% during the same time period. New York City is the leading domestic destination in the country, and tourists visiting in 2023 spent 1.3% more than in 2019, totaling \$48 billion.¹ Meanwhile, demand for Manhattan office space has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, causing property owners to become creative about office buildings' future uses. This Applicant proposes a welcome change that would promote economic activity in the neighborhood. Moreover, the owner has agreed to include elements that minimize conflicts in the neighborhood, such as utilizing subcellar space for off-street loading and deliveries, applying for a designated drop-off zone, and building a separate entrance in order to ensure that the proposed hotel does not conflict with vehicular or pedestrian traffic or cause an impediment on surrounding development and uses. I am happy to support this project that would repurpose underutilized vacant office space and improve tourism and economic activity in our borough

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

I therefore recommend **approval of Application No. C240201ZSM.**



Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

¹ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/press/releases/2024/05/dinapoli-nyc-tourism-approaches-full-recovery-still-top-major-us-tourist-destination>