



January 31, 2024

Hon. Daniel R. Garodnick
Chair
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Dear Chair Garodnick,

We write to urge you to support expansion of the Lincoln Square Special District (LSSD), also known as the Special Lincoln Square District (SLSD), Subdistrict C, to the C4-7 portion of Block 1119, which is largely occupied by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) corporate headquarters and studio building. ABC is moving to Hudson Square.

We believe that this is the time for the proposal to move forward with certification. All stakeholders will have many opportunities to weigh in following certification before any approval is issued. The ULURP process mandates many additional levels of review, which have yet to start. The process includes: Community Board Review, Borough President Review, Borough Board Review, Review Session - Pre-Hearing Review / Post Referral, City Planning Commission Review, Post Hearing Follow-Up / Future Votes, City Planning Commission Vote, City Council Review, Mayoral Review, before any Approval Letter Sent to the Responsible Agency.

In 1993, amendments were made to the original April 24, 1969 LSSD, and ABC and their studio buildings were omitted in order to give them flexibility in their operations. However, now that ABC is vacating, we believe that the underlying zoning should conform to the immediate adjacent neighborhood.

Working with zoning expert George Janes and Community Board 7, Landmark West! applied to the City Planning Commission to consider extending the LSSD to incorporate the vacated campus. On April 19, 2023, Community Board 7 passed a resolution in support of amending the LSSD map to include the entire ABC site as part of Subdistrict C, and they agreed to be a co-applicant in the ULURP process with Landmark West! Pursuing this scenario would buffer the landmark blocks on the Upper West Side/Central Park West from the more mixed-use Lincoln Square neighborhood.

The campus buildings include most of block 1119 between 66 Street and 67 Streets from Central Park West to Columbus Avenue. The ABC buildings are: 125 Columbus Avenue (which stretches between 66 and 67 Streets); 77 West 66 Street; 47 West 66 Street; 7 West 66 Street (former Durland Riding Academy); 24 West 67 Street; 30 West 67 Street; and 60 West 67 Street.

ABC occupies all of the buildings on the north side of 66 Street, (except for 65 Central Park West) but there are six buildings across the street and one on the southwest corner. On West 67 Street, 2 West 67 Street, 40 West 67 Street, and 50 West 67 Street are nestled in between the ABC buildings. Across the street are 1, 15, 17, 27, 33, 35,

39, and 45 West 67 Street. 65 Central Park West is on the southeast corner. 157 Columbus is on the northwest corner.

If the LSSD application is approved, a tower-on-the-base scenario could allow for a series of buildings with the main height of the able-to-be occupied volume at 381 feet tall - potentially 33 livable stories – with an ultimate bulkhead height of 421 feet resting on an 85-foot tall, 8-story base . This is akin to the Mormon Church tower/125 Columbus Avenue, to 22 West 66 Street, and to 10 West 66 Street.

George Janes & Associates created a potential scenario of what could be built as-of-right with no special permit, no change to the Special District, and no community involvement. Standard towers break the sky exposure plane and cover no more than 40% of their zoning lot. Height is only limited by engineering. Examples of as-of-right buildings that could be constructed are 111 West 57 Street and 432 Park Avenue, which are supertalls. The two towers that could be constructed on this site would be similar. One could be 1,600 feet with 14 foot ceilings; and the other could be 1,200-feet with 14 foot ceilings. For reference, 200 Amsterdam, which was the tallest building on the Upper West Side at 668-feet tall, is now eclipsed by 50 West 66 Street, which is under construction by Extell and will top out at 775 feet.

Those who have been told that their light and air will be compromised; or that public amenities are only possible with a scenario of two, tall buildings are wrong. These issues are always hashed out in the ULURP process, and the community and neighbors are front and center in such planning.

We urge certification of the ABC site to be incorporated into the Lincoln Square Special District as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Congressman Jerry Nadler



Borough President Mark Levine



State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal



Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal



Assemblymember Tony Simone



Council Member Gale A. Brewer