



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**DANIEL R. GARODNICK**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 4



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

**SCOTT M. STRINGER**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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March 13, 2008

Dear Neighbor:

After weeks of discussions, and years of hard work, community leaders have finally come to an agreement with the East River Realty Company about the redevelopment of our neighborhood between 35th and 41st Streets.

The City Council has amended the plan in a way that cuts the overall project by over 500,000 square feet, dramatically reduces the heights of buildings to protect our local parks from shadows, provides incentives for moderate and middle income housing, and guarantees public space that is truly open and cannot be shut off from the public. We also secured the necessary easement from the developer to build a waterfront park in the future, and a commitment of \$10 million toward that goal. Here is a summary of the project as it was modified by the City Council:

**Smaller Buildings**

We cut down the height and square footage of all buildings on the northern site, with the greatest reductions at 685 First Avenue, which previously cast the most shadows on Tudor City. We reduced that building to 462 feet (down from 721), so that there will be almost no new shadows on the Tudor City Greens except for a brief period on winter days. We also cut the heights of several other buildings. When this process began, the *shortest* of the five buildings north of 38th Street was 606 feet tall. Now, the *tallest* building on that site is 595 feet tall. The new residential buildings will be comparable in square footage to the Churchill (on 40th Street and Second Avenue).

**Keeping Our Parks Sunlit**

As noted above, the landmarked Tudor City Greens will see almost no new shadows. In addition, we insisted that the two buildings at 616 First Avenue (between

35th and 36th Streets), be completely redesigned to greatly reduce potential shadows on St. Vartan's Park.

### **Scaling Down the Office Building**

We took concrete steps to address the various issues related to the office building. The total square footage of the building has been cut by almost 25%, and the height has been reduced from 688 to 553 feet. We also cut the public parking next to the office building by 50% to discourage car use. The developer has agreed to a number of traffic mitigation measures, which range from instituting carpooling programs to installing bicycle parking to working with the City to improve connections with ferry services on the East River. Finally, we created an open-air performing arts space on the eastern side of the building – programmed by an independent not-for-profit organization – to ensure that there is activity around the building on nights and weekends.

### **New Kinds of Affordable Housing**

The affordable housing plan previously agreed to by the owner has been revised to include incentives for moderate and middle income housing. It will represent over 20% of the new residential space in upzoned areas, at approximately 579 units. The plan will include both on-site new construction and permanent preservation of affordable housing units in the immediate neighborhood that would otherwise have been lost to market rates. Even as we reduced the size of the project, we retained the same percentage of affordable units. Current residents of the neighborhood will have preference for half of the affordable units.

### **Better Public Space**

Half of the entire site is dedicated to public open space – approximately 5 acres. Even as we cut the heights of the buildings, we did not lose an inch of public space. We also took additional steps to ensure the public's access to and enjoyment of the open space. Instead of allowing the developer to control the open space, we created an independent not-for-profit corporation to monitor and program the open space, half of whose Board will consist of community representatives. The new open-air performing arts space, noted above, will be the first of its kind in our neighborhood, and will showcase various cultural groups.

### **Waterfront Access**

We achieved the necessary commitments to begin our work to create magnificent public waterfront open space at this location. The developer has agreed to provide the necessary easement on the eastern edge of the property to allow public parkland over the FDR Drive. We also secured a \$10 million commitment from the developer to provide bridges from the property to the waterfront. And the developer has agreed to provide a permanent “public access easement” through the site along the former street beds of 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets, so that public access to the waterfront can be guaranteed.

## More School Seats

The new school to be built in this development will provide 630 seats for children in grades K-8. The school is slated to open in the fall of 2012, and serve children from the new residential buildings in this development as well as elsewhere in the neighborhood. The schedule for construction of the school cannot be altered except with approval by the City. As part of the Council's modifications, we insisted that the school be relocated from its original location adjacent to the FDR Drive, and it will instead front on First Avenue.

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This development will be a vibrant, mixed-use community, with ground level retail and ample public space. The changes described in this letter are significant and valuable improvements to the plan that will make a huge difference in the life of the neighborhood and the City.

None of this could have been achieved without the determined and vocal advocacy of this community. Thank you for your work on behalf of our neighborhood – it clearly made a difference. If you have any questions about this, or any other neighborhood issues, please do not hesitate to contact Council Member Garodnick's office at 212-818-0580 or Borough President Stringer's office at 212-669-8300.

Sincerely,



Daniel R. Garodnick  
Council Member, District 4



Scott M. Stringer  
Manhattan Borough President