



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

November 19, 2012

Hon. Michael McSweeney
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
141 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Dear Mr. McSweeney:

Pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter, I hereby disapprove the action of the City Council disapproving the decision of the City Planning Commission on ULURP No. C120267 PPM, as set forth in paragraph b of Resolution Number 1578.

In disapproving the disposition of 22 Reade Street the Council has significantly impeded the City's ability to save more than \$100 million over the next twenty years, improve working conditions for City employees, and consolidate government operations. Additionally, this disapproval would result in the loss of significant tax revenue for the City, newly created jobs and much needed economic development.

The Civic Center Plan is a major initiative to reduce the City's real estate costs and increase efficiency. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services conducted a thorough review of City-managed office buildings by analyzing building conditions, configurations, and space utilization. These reviews have clearly shown that the City has more office space than it needs, and that much of the City-owned space is underutilized, in poor condition, and unnecessarily costing taxpayers millions of dollars.

Under the Civic Center Plan both 22 Reade Street and 49-51 Chambers Street were included within a Request for Proposals (RFP) which would allow for reinvestment of these properties by the private sector to save the City significant rehabilitation costs, generate new tax revenues, and provide substantial funding for modern outfitted space for City employees in other buildings.

After working with local elected officials for the past year, the Civic Center Plan included the dedication of at least 10,000 square feet of space for community facility use. This agreement was based on the ability of the City to dispose of both buildings in order to generate the revenue needed to provide space for the community. The final use was to be determined after meeting with a community taskforce representing elected officials, members of Manhattan Community Board 1, and other stakeholders. If 22 Reade Street is not disposed of, the City will not be able to generate the revenue needed to incorporate community space.

On February 25, 1993, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated the African Burial Ground Historic District which encompasses the area from the southern tip of City Hall Park to the north side of Duane Street. This district contains nearly 20,000 remains of both free and enslaved Africans from the 1690s until 1794. Because of the historical significance of this site to countless New Yorkers, the City made it clear in both the formulation of the Civic Center Plan and the subsequent RFP process that the African Burial Ground Historic District and monument should not be disturbed. As a result of this directive, no RFP respondent presented any plan which would violate landmarks law or go against the City's clear desire to preserve this sacred ground.

The Council's disapproval is based, incorrectly, on the assertion that 22 Reade Street is available to be converted into a museum for the African Burial Ground Historic District and that there are realistic proposals and funding to achieve this outcome. By not approving the disposition of 22 Reade Street, however, the Council has ensured that no museum or any other new use will occupy this location. Without the revenue generated from the sale of 22 Reade Street the City will not be able to relocate the building's current occupant, the Department of City Planning. Furthermore, there currently exists an African Burial Ground National Monument and Museum under the auspices of the National Parks Service located at 290 Broadway. My Administration was aware of an interest by Federal elected officials beginning in 2007 to utilize this land as an extension of the African Burial Ground Historic District. Since then, we have not received any realistic proposals or funding plans that warranted any other use except for continued use as a municipal building or by the private sector. The desire for a new African Burial Ground National Monument Museum is laudable, but requires a realistic plan for space, funding and long-term operations. Until then, the preservation of the historic district, and the existing Monument and Museum at 290 Broadway ensure that this vital part of the City's history is properly commemorated. Moreover, stopping the Civic Center Plan, including the disposition of 22 Reade Street, will only slow the pace of re-development needed to continue to generate private investment in this part of Lower Manhattan.

The public review of the proposal conducted under the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure did not identify any land use impacts or implications which warranted City Council disapproval. The Civic Center Plan was also considered in a City Environmental Quality Review which both the City Planning Commission and the City Council recognized met all environmental standards. Therefore there is no land use or environmental justification for the City Council's action.

Accordingly, for all the reasons set forth above, I hereby disapprove the action of the City Council disapproving the decision of the City Planning Decision on ULURP No. C120267 PPM, as set forth in paragraph b of Resolution Number 1578.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Bloomberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Cc: Hon. Christine C. Quinn