

David A. Paterson
Governor



Deborah VanAmerongen
Chairperson

New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal

Hampton Plaza
38-40 State Street
Albany, NY 12207

December 31, 2009

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC AND U.S. MAIL

Mr. Patrick Blanchfield, AICP
Director of Environmental Review
NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
100 Gold Street, Room 9V-3
New York, NY 10038

Re: The Lantern Organization
Proposed Vicinitas Hall
507-513 East 176th Street, Bronx, Bronx County

Dear Mr. Blanchfield:

On April 9 and 12, 2009, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), published a "Combined Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact and Intent to Request Release of Funds". DHCR is the designated tax credit agency for the disbursement of funds in connection with the federal Tax Credit Assistance Program authorized under the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act". DHCR prepared the combined FONSI after compiling its "TCAP Programmatic Environmental Review Record" dated April 9, 2009. On June 17, 2009, DHCR received a notice of Authority to Use Grant Funds, which certifies that the requirements under 24 CFR Part 58 of HUD environmental review regulations had been satisfied.

DHCR has determined that the Environmental Review Record, dated December 16, 2009 for the above referenced project complies with the requirements of 24 CFR Part 58 of HUD Environmental Review regulations. This letter constitutes clearance of the environmental review of this project and removal of the limitation on commitment of HUD TCAP assistance per [24 CFR 58.22(b)].

DHCR, in compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), concurs with the Bronx Board of Standards and Appeals as lead agency, which issued a Negative Declaration, on October 17, 2006.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this environmental clearance letter, please contact me at (518) 402-3392 or bwigzell@nysdhcr.gov. The Environmental Assessment for this site is on the web at <http://nysdhcr.gov/general/ARRA/EnvironmentalReview.htm>.

Sincerely,

Barbara H. Wigzell, R.A.
Certifying Officer
SEQR Officer

Cc: Cathy Frangella, TCAP Program Manager

Web Site: www.nysdhcr.gov
Email address: dhcrinfo@nysdhcr.gov

Environmental Assessment
Site Specific Review

Responsible Entity: NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR)

Certifying Officer: Barbara H. Wigzell, RA, DHCR

Program Name: The Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP)
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009

Federal Agency: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Project #: NA

Project Sponsor: **The Lantern Organization**

Project Name: **Vicinitas Hall**

Project Site Address: 507-513 East 176th Street, Bronx, New York 10457

Project County: Bronx

Estimated project costs: \$15,897,663.00

Total TCAP Award: \$1,000,000.00

Project Sponsor Address: 49 West 37th Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10018

Primary Contact's Name: Patrick Blanchfield, AICP

E-Mail address: blanchfp@hpd.nyc.gov

Telephone Number: (212) 863-5056

Program Classification: 58.36 - Environmental Assessment

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING: [58.40(g)]

Finding of No Significant Impact - The project will not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human environment.

Finding of Significant Impact - The project may significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the City of New York - Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) has conducted an environmental review of the project identified above and prepared the attached environmental review record in compliance with all applicable provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, (42 USC sec. 4321 et seq.) and its implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 58.

Preparer Signature:

NAME: Patrick Blanchfield, Director
Title/Agency: HPD Env. Planning

Date: 12/16/09

Project Name: Vicinitas Hall
Project #: NA

Environmental Assessment Site Specific Review

Project Description:

The City of New York - Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) intends to undertake activities funded through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP) to finance the completion of a new, seven-story, 68-unit supportive housing development at 507-513 East 176th Street in the Bronx (Block 2924, Lot 38, 39, 42). The proposed project also includes ancillary common space for building residents, space for social service provisions, a laundry room and a landscaped rear yard. The project site is located on the north side of East 176th Street at Third Avenue. The project site covers approximately 6,852 square feet and was formerly used as a parking lot. The property is owned by Amber Housing Development Fund Corporation (HDFC), a subsidiary of the project sponsor, The Lantern Organization.

The Lantern Organization, the project sponsor, proposes to create a new supportive housing development which would offer 68 studio apartments. Building management would be provided by The Lantern Organization, which owns other nearby supportive housing developments. Of the total 68 units, 41 would be rented to individuals aging out of the foster care system who would otherwise be at risk of chronic homelessness. The remaining 27 units would be rented to members of the surrounding community, with preference given to younger tenants. All units would be limited to individuals earning up to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

The total development cost for the proposed project is estimated at \$15,897,663. In addition to TCAP, HPD has already provided a total of \$6,800,000 in HUD HOME funds and \$216,240 of City Capital funds towards the construction of the 68 units in the project. The New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation (HHAC) provided \$3,150,000 in funds towards the project. The sponsor also received an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) from HPD which generated \$4,731,423 in equity.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Alternatives and Project Modifications Considered [24 CFR 58.40(e), Ref. 40 CFR 1508.9]

(Identify other reasonable courses of action that were considered and not selected, such as other sites, design modifications, or other uses of the subject site. Describe the benefits and adverse impacts to the human environment of each alternative and the reasons for rejecting it.)

There is a significant need for supportive and affordable housing in New York City and the proposed project would provide such housing. As discussed in the appendices, the proposed project would not significantly affect the character, features and resources of the surrounding area. In some cases the proposed project would result in potential benefits by providing improvements in urban design conditions and new jobs. The proposed project would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human environment.

The requested TCAP funding would finance the completion of the proposed project, which is currently under construction. Since the project site is owned by the sponsor, the only alternative considered is the No Action, described below.

No Action: Under No Action conditions, completion of the proposed project would not occur and 68 units of needed supportive housing would be lost. In addition, portions of the project site would not undergo remediation and contamination would remain. Under the No-Action condition, the site would remain in unproductive use and affordable housing opportunities would be lost.

Action: Refer to Project Description above.

Mitigation Measures Recommended [24 CFR 58.40(d), 40 CFR 1508.20]

(Recommend feasible ways in which the proposal or its external factors should be modified in order to minimize adverse environmental impacts and restore or enhance environmental quality.)

The proposed project would require measures associated with the remediation of hazardous materials contamination. Mitigation measures would be included as part of the proposed project and would occur in accordance with a New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)-approved Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP). Remediation would include the disposal of excavated soil, replacement with clean fill and the installation of a vapor barrier and passive ventilation system below the foundation of the proposed building. Remedial measures would also include the submission of post-construction air quality tests and a P.E.-certified Closure Report to the DEP. With the measures included as part of the proposed project, significant adverse impacts would not occur.

Additional Studies Performed

Phase IESA prepared by EPDSCO, Inc. December 2005

CEQR EAS prepared for the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals, CEQR No. 06BSA095X

List of Attachments:

Phase IESA December 2005

Correspondence from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (Notice to Proceed) dated 6/27/07

BSA Resolution 10/16/06

FEMA Floodplain Map #3604970082F

Coastal Management Map Section 3

Zoning Map 3d

Federal Wetlands Map

NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) memo dated 5/16/06

List of Sources, Agencies and Persons Consulted [40 CFR 1508.9(b)]

New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission

New York City Board of Standards and Appeals

New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development

New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

New York City Department of City Planning

APPENDIX A
Statutory Checklist

Site Specific
[24CFR §58.5 and 58.6]

Project #: NA
 Project Name: Vicinitas Hall
 Project Address: 507-513 East 176 Street, Bronx, New York
 Block 2924, Lots 38, 39, 42
 Date: December 16, 2009

For each listed statute, executive order or regulation, record the determinations made. Note reviews, consultations or mitigation measures required:

A - Not Applicable to this project OR B - Consultation, Permit and/or Mitigation Required

Then, make a determination of compliance or consistency in the Section provided.

Factors	A	B	Determinations and Compliance Documentation
Historic Preservation [36 CFR 800]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) was consulted. LPC determined that the project would not adversely affect historic resources. In a memo dated May 17, 2006, LPC stated that the site had no architectural or archeological significance. (See LPC memo, dated 5-17-06 attached.)
Floodplain Management [24 CFR 55, Executive Order 11988]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The project site is not located within a Special Flood Hazard Area. (See attached FEMA FIRM Panel No. 3604970082F.)
Wetlands Protection [Executive Order 11990]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The site is not located within a federally identified wetland. (See attached federal wetlands map, http://wetlandsfws.er.usgs.gov/imf/imf.jsp?site=NWI_CONUS)
Coastal Zone Management Act [Sections 307(c),(d)]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project is not located within the boundaries of NYC's Coastal Zone. There would be no effect from the proposed project. (See attached Coastal Zone Boundary Map Section 3)
Sole Source Aquifers [40 CFR 149]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The project site is located in the Bronx and is not located above a sole source aquifer. No impacts would result from the proposed project.
Endangered Species Act [50 CFR 402]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project is located in a developed, urban area of the Bronx in New York City. The proposed project involves new construction in an area previously disturbed and developed. The proposed project is not located immediately adjacent to or on the Hudson River, the habitat for the short-nosed sturgeon, the only listed endangered species for Bronx County. The proposed project would not result in significant impacts related to the Endangered Species Act. (http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/CountyLists/BronxDec2006.htm)
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act [Sections 7 (b), (c)]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers within New York City, as designated by the US Department of the Interior. Therefore, the proposed project would not violate the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
Air Quality [Clean Air Act, Sections 176 (c) and (d), and 40 CFR 6, 51, 93]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project is located in a non-attainment area. However, it would not generate significant levels of traffic, therefore no exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) associated with carbon monoxide (CO) or particulate matter (PM) would result. The project would not adversely affect the State Implementation Plan (SIP).
Farmland Protection Policy Act [7 CFR 658]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project does not involve the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use and therefore does not violate the Farmland Protection Policy Act.
Environmental Justice [Executive Order 12898]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed project would be located in a predominantly low-income and minority area. It is intended to serve an existing need for affordable housing and is not expected to facilitate development which would result in adverse

			<p>environmental justice impacts.</p> <p>Although the project site is located in a neighborhood which is characterized as low-income and minority, the proposed project would not result in any unmitigated impacts. Measures regarding hazardous materials remediation would be provided by the project sponsor, The Lantern Organization.</p>
Noise Abatement and Control [24 CFR 51 B]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A noise study was conducted by EPDSCO, Inc. on August 3, 2006. Existing noise levels were measured for 20-minute intervals during the morning peak hour (8:20 - 8:40 AM) and the evening peak hour (5:40 - 6:00 PM). The measurements were taken at the corner of East 176th Street and Third Avenue in front of the project site. The highest recorded L10 noise measurement was 64.1 dBA, which places the project site in the Acceptable zone (below 65 dBA). Therefore, no window-wall attenuation is required. (Refer to letter from EPDSCO to DEP dated August 9, 2006).</p>
Toxic or Hazardous Substances and Radioactive Materials [HUD Notice 79-33]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Due to contamination identified in connection with a Phase II Environmental Subsurface Investigation conducted by EEA Inc, remediation would be required at the project site. The Phase II testing revealed elevated levels of VOCs, SVOCs and metals. High levels of total petroleum hydrocarbons were detected in surface soil samples and in accordance with state regulations, a spill was called in to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC Spill No. 0609916). The spill was closed on September 18, 2008.</p> <p>As a result of contamination, the proposed project would require measures associated with the remediation of hazardous materials contamination. Mitigation measures would be included as part of the proposed project and would occur in accordance with a New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)-approved Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP).</p> <p>Remediation would include the disposal of excavated soil, replacement with clean fill and the installation of a vapor barrier and passive ventilation system below the foundation of the proposed building. Remedial measures would also include the submission of post-construction air quality tests and a P.E.-certified Closure Report to DEP. With the measures included as part of the proposed project, significant adverse impacts would not occur. (See attached "Notice to Proceed" correspondence from DEP to Bronx Borough DOB Commissioner Kaminer dated June 27, 2007.)</p> <p>According to the EPA's Map of Radon Zones, Bronx County is considered to have low potential (it has a predicted average indoor radon screening level less than 2 pCi/L). Therefore, radon exposure is not anticipated. (http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap/newyork.htm).</p> <p>The RAP, CHASP, and Closure Report would be provided by the sponsor and required through the TCAP Written Agreement between the sponsor and HPD.</p>
Siting of HUD-Assisted Projects near Hazardous Operations [24 CFR 51 C]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Neither the project site nor any of the adjacent properties were identified in the listing of registered petroleum bulk storage facilities. Furthermore, a visual survey of the surrounding area revealed that there are no exterior above-ground storage tanks within 1,000 feet of the project site with a direct line of sight to the proposed project. In addition, the exterior above-ground storage of explosives or hazardous materials within New York City is subject to New York City Fire Department (FDNY) permitting which requires appropriate blast and thermal protection materials around the storage tank to protect adjacent properties. No impacts would result. (See Phase I ESA, EEA Inc)</p>
Airport Clear Zones and Accident Potential Zones [24 CFR 51 D]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed project is not located within 1 mile of an airport clear zone or accident potential zone. No impacts would result</p>

NOTES:

Preparer _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B
Environmental Assessment Checklist
Site Specific

Project #: **NA**
 Project Name: **Vicinitas Hall**
 Project Address: 507-513 East 176 Street, Bronx, New York
 Block 2924, Lots 38, 39, 42
 Date: December 16, 2009

[Environmental Review Guide HUD CPD 782, 24 CFR 58.40; Ref. 40 CFR 1508.8 & 1508.27]
 Evaluate the significance of the effects of the proposal on the character, features and resources of the project area.

Enter relevant base data and verifiable source documentation to support the finding. Then enter the appropriate impact code from the following list to make a finding of impact. **Impact Codes:** (1) - No impact anticipated; (2) - Potentially beneficial; (3) - Potentially adverse; (4) - Requires mitigation; (5) - Requires project modification. Note names, dates of contact, telephone numbers and page references. Attach additional materials as needed.

Land Development	Code	Source or Documentation
Conformance with Comprehensive Plans and Zoning	1	The project site is located within a M1-4 zoning district and no change in zoning would be provided; however, the proposed project requires use and bulk variances which were granted by the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA), and approved in October 2006. Based on a CEQR-level environmental review conducted for the BSA actions, the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to land use, zoning or public policy. (See attached BSA Resolution, October 16, 2006.)
Compatibility and Urban Impact	2	The proposed project would result in the redevelopment of an underutilized lot with a new residential building. The proposed development would be consistent with the surrounding land uses and prevailing urban design conditions in the surrounding area and would result in a potential benefit by replacing a vacant lot with a new residential development.
Slope	1	There would be no change in slope due to the proposed project. The project is located upon a previously disturbed lot within an urban area. No significant impacts would result.
Erosion	1	The project is located in densely developed urban area of the Bronx. It would not result in significant effects related to soil erosion.
Soil Suitability	2	The soil of the project site shows evidence of contamination. As discussed previously, the proposed project requires measures associated with remediation which would be included as part of

		the proposed project, including the removal and disposal of contaminated soil and its replacement with clean fill. With these measures provided as part of the proposed project no impacts would occur.
Hazards and Nuisances including Site Safety	4	The construction effects associated with the proposed project would be typical of construction effects throughout New York City, including temporary sidewalk closures, fugitive dust and construction noise. The effects would be addressed under existing local regulations governing construction activity within New York City. The proposed project would not result in any hazards and nuisances. Furthermore, because of the contaminants in the soil, the proposed project includes measures to protect the safety of workers on site through the DEP-approved RAP and CHASP. Construction activities at the project site would occur in accordance with the approved CHASP. No significant adverse impacts would occur.
Energy Consumption	1	The proposed project would utilize existing power utilities and would not place a significant demand on energy resources.
Neighborhood Impacts		
Noise - Contribution to Community Noise Levels	1	The proposed project would not contribute to community noise levels as it would not result in significant levels of traffic (mobile source noise). In addition, the proposed project's building mechanical system (i.e., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems) would be designed to meet all applicable noise regulations (i.e., Subchapter 5, §24-227 of the New York City Noise Control Code, the New York City Department of Buildings Code) to avoid producing levels that would result in any significant increase in ambient noise levels.
Air Quality - Effects of Ambient Air Quality on Project and Contribution to Community Pollution Levels	1	The proposed project would not result in any effects on ambient air quality. The proposed 7-story building would be taller than nearby buildings and would not result in any impacts associated with building emissions. The proposed project would also utilize a natural gas boiler system for heating. In addition, the project site is not located in proximity to any industrial emission sources or large-scale emission sources that have the potential to impact future residents. Therefore, no stationary source air quality impacts are expected as a result of the proposed project (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.)
Environmental Design Visual Quality - Coherence, Diversity, Compatible Use and Scale	1	The proposed project would involve the construction of a 7-story building. The proposed redevelopment would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design, visual resources or neighborhood character. It would provide a benefit by improving the site and providing much needed affordable housing for the neighborhood. The new development is likely to possess residential character consistent with that of surrounding uses. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.)

Socioeconomic		
Demographic Character Changes	1	No impact associated with demographic character changes would result from the proposed project. The project is expected to provide safe, affordable housing for a population similar to the population which currently resides in the area.
Displacement	1	The project site is currently vacant; therefore, no displacement would occur.
Employment and Income Patterns	1	The proposed project would result in additional jobs associated with construction of the new building on the project site. Once constructed, the buildings would require maintenance personnel and supportive service staff. The project would not result in a demographic change or a substantial effect on income patterns.
Community Facilities and Services		
Educational Facilities	1	The proposed project would contain studios for single youths, the majority of which have aged out of foster care. Because of their age, these individuals are not expected to place a burden on public schools operated or chartered by the New York City Department of Education (DOE). The proposed project would not introduce more than 50 school-age children, as the building would consist of studio apartments solely for individual tenants. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
Commercial Facilities	2	Many locally-owned businesses are located on East Tremont Avenue and Park Avenue within close proximity to the proposed project. New residents at the project site are likely to make use of these businesses, which is a potential benefit. No impacts would result related to commercial facilities.
Health Care	1	The proposed project would not place a significant demand on outpatient healthcare facilities. Health care facilities in the Bronx are easily accessible by public transportation and would not be significantly impacted by the proposed project. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
Social Services	1	Social services are provided in the neighborhood and throughout the Bronx by a range of nonprofit organizations and City agencies. Additionally, the proposed project would provide case management and social services for tenants on-site. No impacts to social services in the area are expected.
Solid Waste	1	Municipal solid waste disposal is provided by the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY). The proposed project would not place a significant demand on these services. No impact would result from the proposed project.
Waste Water	1	Waste water would be handled by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The proposed project would not place a significant demand on DEP's services. No impact is anticipated.

Storm Water	1	New York City's storm water management system is handled by DEP. The project site is less than 1 acre in size and therefore would not require a SPDES permit. The project is not expected to place a significant demand on these services. No impact would result.
Water Supply	1	New York City's potable water supply is handled by DEP. The proposed project would not place a significant demand on this service.
Public Safety - Police	1	No impact on the police services in the area is expected. Police services are provided by the New York City Police Department (NYPD).
- Fire	1	No impact on the fire services in the area is expected. Fire response services are provided by New York City Fire Department (FDNY).
- Emergency Medical	1	The proposed project would not result in impacts to emergency medical facilities in the area. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
- Open Space	1	The project is not expected to place a significant demand on open space resources in the area. The site is located in close proximity to a number of public parks that provide open space, and adjacent to Crotona Park. The proposed project would also include an open area for tenant use in the building's rear yard. No impacts would result. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
- Recreation	1	The proposed project is not expected to place a significant demand on recreational resources in the area. The site is located in close proximity to several playgrounds and parks, including Crotona Park. The project will also include a landscaped open area for tenant use in the building's rear yard. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
- Cultural Facilities	1	The project is not expected to place a significant demand on cultural facilities in the area. The project is located in New York City, which is home to ample cultural facilities accessible to residents. Examples of cultural facilities available to residents of the Bronx include the Bronx Botanical Gardens, the Bronx Zoo as well as Fordham University.
- Transportation	1	The project site is near several city bus routes. The Metro-North Tremont station at 176 th Street and Park Avenue is just three blocks west of the site. The No. 3 subway line is one block south. No significant impact on the area's transportation services would result from the proposed project. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in significant levels of traffic. (BSA EAS, CEQR No. 06BSA095X.).
Natural Features		
Water Resources	1	The project would not result in a significant effect on water resources, including groundwater and/or surface water.

Surface Water	1	The project would not have a significant effect on surface water in the area.
Unique Natural Features and Agricultural Lands	1	There are no unique natural features or agricultural lands in the vicinity of the project site. No impacts would result from the proposed project.
Vegetation and Wildlife	1	The proposed project is located in a developed, urban area in the Bronx, New York. The proposed project is not located immediately adjacent to the East River, the habitat for the short-nosed sturgeon, the only listed endangered species for Bronx County. (http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/CountyLists/BronxDec2006.htm)
Flood Disaster Protection Act [Flood Insurance]	1	The project site is not located within a Special Flood Hazard Area. (See attached FEMA FIRM Panel No. 3604970082F.)
Coastal Barrier Resources Act/ Coastal Barrier Improvement Act [§58.6(c)]	1	The project site is not located on a Coastal Barrier Resource.
Airport Runway Clear Zone or Clear Zone Disclosure [§58.6(d)]	1	The proposed project is not located within 1 mile of an airport clear zone. No impacts would result.
Other Factors		
Other Factors		
Other Factors		

Comments:

Preparer

Date

END OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

