



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 19, 2013

Matthew Urbanski
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc.
16 Court Street, 11th Floor
Brooklyn, New York 11241

Re: Suggestions for Block 4

Dear Matthew:

First of all, we wish to thank you and your colleagues for meeting with us at the HYCD office on July 10th. We were grateful for the opportunity to revisit the plans for the Hudson Boulevard Park and review preliminary plans for Block 4.

We took your suggestion to visit the MVVA designed park in Union Square and Tear Drop Park in Battery Park City. We were impressed with what you achieved in both parks.

In Union Square, we especially liked the "Centrifuge" as one devotee called it. He and two companions in their late teens gave us a demonstration. We grew dizzy watching them enjoy themselves getting dizzy. We want a dozen of the things. (We will take two or three). We also liked the "Dome." We would like two domes even more.

The children's area was also admired, especially for its spaciousness.

We thought Tear Drop Park was admirably designed for the residential buildings which surround it.. While the sense of a hidden, private garden surely must satisfy the somewhat exclusive residential community it serves,

we feel block 4 must be being more open, more visible, less hidden. That is: you might not know Tear Drop Park was there, unless you lived above it. We had to ask directions even though we standing almost in front of the entrance to the Park. Block 4 must be inviting to the residents of the larger surrounding Hell's Kitchen community, as well as to the swells fortunate enough to live directly above it.

We thought the use of contour and elevation gave Tear Drop Park a dynamic sense of space. We liked it. We wondered if one longer slide, instead of two short ones, might enhance, for the “slidee,” that exhilarating sense of slaloming down a hill.

At Tear Drop, we spoke with one of the gardeners from the Battery Park City Conservancy. It was instructive. The ground covers and trees, while not entirely maintenance-free, made the task of keeping the park looking spiffy easier. Fifty shades of green seem often to be the palette of choice by park management. We wondered if more color were possible for Block 4. The beds on the perimeter of Hell's Kitchen Park (Tenth Avenue between 47th and 48th Streets), for example, blooming with annuals and perennials planted and maintained entirely by community volunteers, has brought a welcome three-season display of floral beauty to the surrounding neighborhood.

As well, a more open and visible park perimeter, like the flower beds in Hell's Kitchen Park, might help enhance the sense of inviting accessibility we want to achieve.

At the end of our tour, we came upon the small pool with water flowing over a rippled bottom like a running brook. Our senses were delighted. The gurgling sound, the light playing on the moving water, the coolness to the touch — our District Manager had to be restrained from removing his shoes and wading. We want a stream running through all six parkettes.

Our suggestions were reviewed by the Waterfront and Parks Committee and the Chelsea Preservation Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 on July 15th. Both committees were enthusiastic about the basic design and our modest though brilliant tweaks. The suggestions will also be reviewed by the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use and Zoning Committee on July 24th.

In the meantime, we hope you will be able to review and find merit in our design suggestions. Attached is an illustration. We look forward to visiting your studio in Brooklyn on July 29th.

Sincerely,

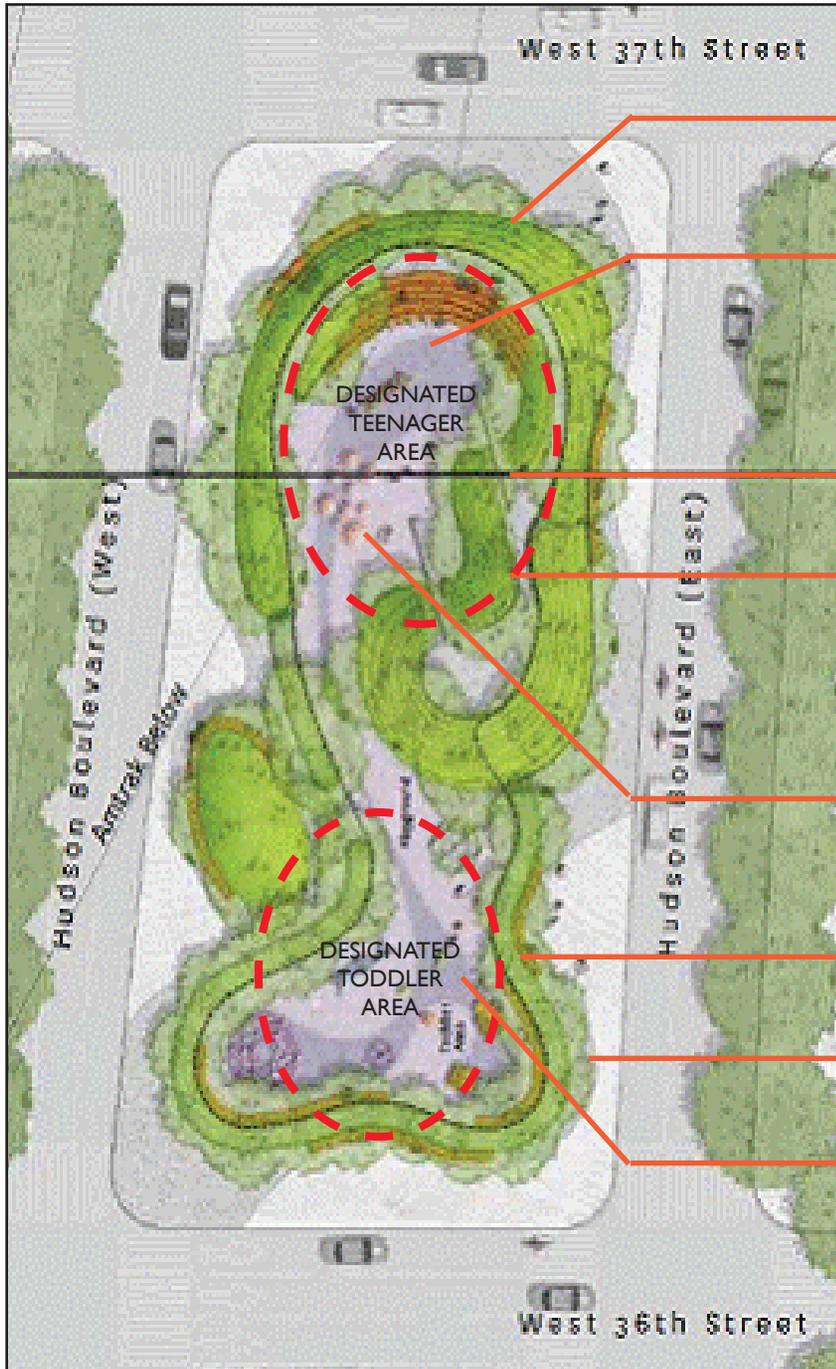


Corey Johnson
Chair

Jean-Daniel Noland
Co-Chair,
Clinton / Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Attachment: CB4 Suggestions for Block 4 Illustration

CB4 DESIGN SUGGESTIONS FOR HYD, BLOCK 4



Make edges of park less dense and more transparent

Include multiple spinning structures

Rolling rapids water feature

Remove one of the slides

Covered domes

Colorful plants & flowers throughout block

Clear signage along edge of park

Traditional playground

