



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

## E-MAIL TRANSMITTAL

Community Board 2 Distribution TO	Borough President Marty Markowitz FROM
16 SEPT 04  DATE	Judd Schechtman, Enviro. Specialist & Land Use Coordinator Phone: (718) 802-3856 E-Mail: jschechtman@brooklynbp.org CONTACT
ULURP Recommendation 040215 ZMK, 040216 ZSK, 040217 ZSK, RE:	<b>4</b>  NO. PAGES, INCLUDING COVER

Attached is the recommendation report for Watchtower/85 Jay St., ULURP application numbers 040215 ZMK, 040216 ZSK, 040217 ZSK

If you have any questions, please contact Judd Schechtman at (718) 802-3856.

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# Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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FAX # (212) 720-3356

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicants representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION #      040215 ZMK, 040216 ZSK & 040217 ZSK  
DESCRIPTION      Watchtower 85 Jay Street Rezoning and Special Permits

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO.      2      BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

## RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS
- DISAPPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS
- DISAPPROVE

## EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION – MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

See Attachment

- RECOMMENDATION ATTACHED
- RECOMMENDATION TO FOLLOW

  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

September 16, 2004

DATE

## Brooklyn Borough President's Recommendation Report Watchtower 85 Jay Street

After a thorough review of the proposed project, testimony at the Borough President's public hearing, a review of letters, petitions and postcards sent regarding this project; and Community Board Two's recommendation, the Borough President believes that the project as proposed by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York (Watchtower) is both out-of-character with the scale of the DUMBO and Vinegar Hill neighborhoods and fails to meet the community's needs on a number of substantive matters.

During a meeting with the Borough President's Office subsequent to the hearing at Borough Hall, Watchtower presented sketches depicting potential reconfiguration of the proposed buildings along Bridge and Front Streets that it felt complied with the Community Board's recommendations. The Borough President believes that the proposed revisions do not approach the extent to which the project would need to be modified to address his concerns.

The area proposed for rezoning is framed by the three-to-ten story buildings located directly across the street and extending outward from the subject site. This block serves as a transition between the taller concrete industrial buildings found west of Jay Street and the 3-6 story buildings surrounding the site along Fulton, Bridge and York Streets.

Appropriate development for this site must contribute to the character and quality-of-life of these neighborhoods. Suitable height and density is achieved when it respects the transition as one crosses under the Manhattan Bridge towards or away from Vinegar Hill. In addition, the allowable building height must acknowledge the potential for Jay Street to become the most likely neighborhood commercial corridor due to the location of the York Street subway station and link to Downtown Brooklyn. Any proposed development must be complimentary to the historic DUMBO and Vinegar Hill neighborhoods.

The Borough President believes that a combination of contextual zoning districts that restrict height to approximately 120 feet along Jay Street and 70 feet for the remainder of the site would mitigate his concerns. Such a solution would reflect the lower-density scale of the neighborhoods and balances responsible development of DUMBO and Vinegar Hill with community preservation.

The Brooklyn Borough President further believes that the Watchtower's proposal does not adequately fit the needs of the community and enhance the economy of the DUMBO, Farragut and Vinegar Hill communities. The proposal's lack of retail along Jay Street impedes efforts to develop that street as the primary community corridor to Downtown Brooklyn and fails to achieve sufficient 24 hour activity in proximity to the York Street subway station. Retail activity is necessary to service the neighborhood's needs and as a method of enhancing safety and security by activating the street.

Incorporating a 1,600 seat cafeteria minimizes the potential economic benefit to area restaurants and food stores that would otherwise gain business through a more traditional residential development.

The community is also not benefited by the provision of the proposed public parking garage, since no spaces would be made available to residents not associated with Watchtower or for

public hourly parking. Additionally, the proposed scale of the garage combined with the truck traffic associated with the proposed complex will overwhelm the area as the community continues to grow.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Be it resolved that the Borough President of the Borough of Brooklyn, pursuant to section 197-c of the New York City Charter, recommends disapproval of the applications unless the City Planning Commission and/or City Council:

- 1) Reduce the entire bulk of the project to approximately 60% of the proposed floor area;
- 2) Restrict height to 120 feet (i.e. a zoning map amendment of M1-2/R8A) along Jay Street;
- 3) Restrict height to 70 feet (i.e. a zoning map amendment of M1-2/R6A) for the balance of the rezoning area;
- 4) Reduce the number of spaces for the public parking garage to approximately 60% of the proposed capacity as well as disallow the 76,000 sf of the proposed exempt garage floor area.