

---

# WEST SIDE THE SPIRIT

*Upper West Side News & Community*

 [Subscribe to News](#)  [Subscribe to Comments](#)

[Our Town](#) | [New York Family](#) | [Blackboard Awards](#) | [City Hall](#) | [CityArts](#)

- [News](#)
  - [News & Features](#)
  - [West Side Express](#)
  - [Crime Watch](#)
- [Business](#)
  - [Block Party](#)
  - [News](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
  - [Film](#)
  - [Music](#)
  - [Theater](#)
  - [Art](#)
  - [Design](#)
  - [Dance](#)
  - [Books](#)
  - [City Week](#)
- [Dining](#)
  - [Dining Reviews](#)
  - [Snack Attack](#)
  - [The Penniless Epicure](#)
- [Op-ed](#)
  - [Editorial](#)
  - [Open Forum](#)
  - [Letters to the Editor](#)
  - [Columns](#)
    - [Capitol Connection](#)
    - [Manhattan Memoir](#)
    - [According to Ben](#)
    - [Citiquette](#)
    - [City Stories: Stoops to Nuts](#)

- [Moore Thoughts](#)
- [Dewing Things Better](#)
- [Guest Columnist](#)
- [New York Gal](#)
- [Sez I To Myself](#)
- [Susan Braudy's Diary](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Special Sections](#)
  - [Healthy Manhattan](#)
  - [Pets](#)
  - [Seniors](#)
  - [Best of Manhattan](#)
  - [Blackboard Awards](#)
  - [Camps](#)
  - [Building Workers](#)
  - [WESTYS](#)
  - [Summer Guide](#)
  - [West Side Spirit Anniversary](#)
  - [Religion](#)
  - [Hudson Valley](#)

## New Spot, Same Reaction

Posted by [West Side Spirit](#) on August 10, 2011 · [Leave a Comment](#)

*Jewish Home Lifecare gets cold shoulder from residents on new proposal*

By [Megan Finnegan](#)

Jewish Home Lifecare is hoping that the third time is the charm in its quest for a new Upper West Side location. The not-for-profit company, which provides elder care services in Manhattan and the Bronx, currently runs a nursing home facility on 106th Street and has been looking to redevelop for several years.

After initiating a controversial land swap with a developer, JHL planned to build a new facility on West 100th Street but is now on the verge of announcing its third potential location on West 97th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam avenues, on a parking lot that currently belongs to Park West Village. As the company prepares to unveil its latest plan, some community members have already taken a stance against it.



The proposed location of the new Jewish Home Lifecare nursing home. Photo by Daniel S. Burnstein.

“Jewish Home Lifecare does not speak to the community,” said Catherine Unsino, a local resident and a nursing home care advocate. “We’ve protested the Department of Health in Albany. They did not have a public process that they’re supposed to have.”

Unsino and a handful of other residents set up a table at the 97th Street greenmarket last week just outside the lot where JHL will potentially construct its new 24-story building. They spoke to people passing by on the sidewalk and gathered signatures on a petition to protest the location.

Maggie Peyton, president of the Park West Village Tenants Association, said her main objection to the project was the fact that tenants will lose their above-ground parking lot and be forced to use valet parking underground, which she said isn’t safe.

“We are saying that we are not going because this is a diminishment of service, this was not what was on our lease,” said Peyton. “We’re prepared to go to a judge.”

Peyton also pointed out that replacing the parking lot doesn’t just change parking, it blocks out the light and air the open lot currently allows on the street.

“It will cast a shadow over everything,” said Jean Dorsey, who lives across the street from the site. “This is a block that is very child friendly—we have schools, a daycare center, we have a clinic that gets a lot of kids. We have a lot of young people.”

Emily Margolis, who lives in 400 Central Park West, one of the seven Park West Village apartment buildings, said she worries that the new development won’t provide enough sorely needed nursing home space.

“This plan does not allow for any expansion,” said Margolis. “There could easily be the need in the future.

The place for expansion is up there on 106th.”

Unsino and others insist that their group’s objections go beyond the choice of location, but that’s one of the main issues that has been plaguing JHL since it first began exploring options to expand. Originally, JHL applied for an exemption from contextual zoning laws that would have allowed them to build a new facility at their current 106th Street location. Following state regulations, they obtained a Certificate of Need for the project and looked for a development partner who would buy a portion of their land parcel and in turn provide funding for a new, state-of-the-art elder care facility. At the time, JHL worked with the community board and elected officials to compose a plan that would work for the neighborhood, but they couldn’t find a developer interested in the deal.

What they found instead was the opportunity to swap land with a developer, the Chetrit Group, which owns the Park West Village complex and can now build on the 106th Street site, which has a zoning exemption attached to it. In turn, JHL would receive what CEO Audrey Weiner told the Wall Street Journal last year would be “tens of millions of dollars” as well as a new site for their facility. That site was on 100th Street, but the plan drew the same community ire that is now being mustered against the 97th Street plan. Part of that community outrage was based on the fact that JHL was not required to change its Certificate of Need with the state; they were legally only required to make an amendment, which local officials call an unacceptable oversight by the Department of Health.

“An amendment—it’s just a small, minor change and it doesn’t warrant any type of public hearing,” said City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. “That to me is outrageous, that the local community would not have a say in this process.” She and State Sen. Bill Perkins have written to the state to call for additional hearings on the basis that the plan has changed dramatically since the Certificate of Need was issued.

“The concern here, overall, is the process,” said Mark-Viverito. “There are some legitimate concerns of the residents that, whether it’s 100th Street or 97th Street, it really doesn’t seem to be a good area for the size of this project. One hundred and sixth was a much better location because it was a wider street. A lot of work was put into getting the community to support it.”

But Ethan Geto, who represents JHL, said all of the community’s concerns will be addressed when JHL is ready to release its full plans. He is hoping to organize an open community forum in September or October to answer neighbors’ questions fully.

While he could not confirm that JHL plans to build at the 97th Street site, citing ongoing negotiations, Geto said they are already working to get in front of the community’s potential grievances.

“We are particularly aware of the trepidation about the traffic impacts, so we are prepared to take many mitigation measures that would significantly, dramatically impact traffic,” Geto said. He could not specify what measures would be taken, but some fear that it may involve narrowing the sidewalk to widen the street, which would take away from space for the popular greenmarket held there.

Geto said JHL is planning to construct the building in line with state-of-the-art geriatric care standards created by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Greenhouse Project—not to be conflated with a hothouse for plants or a tricked-out eco-friendly house—lays out plans intended to alleviate the lack of privacy and warehousing feel that some contemporary nursing homes engender. Geto said each resident would have a private room and bathroom that open onto a shared living, kitchen and dining New Spot, Same Reaction

Jewish Home Lifecare gets cold shoulder from residents on new proposal

By Megan Finnegan

Jewish Home Lifecare is hoping that the third time is the charm in its quest for a new Upper West Side

location. The not-for-profit company, which provides elder care services in Manhattan and the Bronx, currently runs a nursing home facility on 106th Street and has been looking to redevelop for several years.

After initiating a controversial land swap with a developer, JHL planned to build a new facility on West 100th Street but is now on the verge of announcing its third potential location on West 97th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam avenues, on a parking lot that currently belongs to Park West Village. As the company prepares to unveil its latest plan, some community members have already taken a stance against it.

“Jewish Home Lifecare does not speak to the community,” said Catherine Unsino, a local resident and a nursing home care advocate. “We’ve protested the Department of Health in Albany. They did not have a public process that they’re supposed to have.”

Unsino and a handful of other residents set up a table at the 97th Street greenmarket last week just outside the lot where JHL will potentially construct its new 24-story building. They spoke to people passing by on the sidewalk and gathered signatures on a petition to protest the location.

Maggie Peyton, president of the Park West Village Tenants Association, said her main objection to the project was the fact that tenants will lose their above-ground parking lot and be forced to use valet parking underground, which she said isn’t safe.

“We are saying that we are not going because this is a diminishment of service, this was not what was on our lease,” said Peyton. “We’re prepared to go to a judge.”

Peyton also pointed out that replacing the parking lot doesn’t just change parking, it blocks out the light and air the open lot currently allows on the street.

“It will cast a shadow over everything,” said Jean Dorsey, who lives across the street from the site. “This is a block that is very child friendly—we have schools, a daycare center, we have a clinic that gets a lot of kids. We have a lot of young people.”

Emily Margolis, who lives in 400 Central Park West, one of the seven Park West Village apartment buildings, said she worries that the new development won’t provide enough sorely needed nursing home space.

“This plan does not allow for any expansion,” said Margolis. “There could easily be the need in the future. The place for expansion is up there on 106th.”

Unsino and others insist that their group’s objections go beyond the choice of location, but that’s one of the main issues that has been plaguing JHL since it first began exploring options to expand. Originally, JHL applied for an exemption from contextual zoning laws that would have allowed them to build a new facility at their current 106th Street location. Following state regulations, they obtained a Certificate of Need for the project and looked for a development partner who would buy a portion of their land parcel and in turn provide funding for a new, state-of-the-art elder care facility. At the time, JHL worked with the community board and elected officials to compose a plan that would work for the neighborhood, but they couldn’t find a developer interested in the deal.

What they found instead was the opportunity to swap land with a developer, the Chetrit Group, which owns the Park West Village complex and can now build on the 106th Street site, which has a zoning exemption attached to it. In turn, JHL would receive what CEO Audrey Weiner told the Wall Street Journal last year would be “tens of millions of dollars” as well as a new site for their facility. That site was on 100th Street, but the plan drew the same community ire that is now being mustered against the 97th Street plan. Part of that community outrage was based on the fact that JHL was not required to change its Certificate of Need with the state; they were legally only required to make an amendment, which local officials call an unacceptable oversight by the Department of Health.

“An amendment—it’s just a small, minor change and it doesn’t warrant any type of public hearing,” said City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito. “That to me is outrageous, that the local community would not have a say in this process.” She and State Sen. Bill Perkins have written to the state to call for additional hearings on the basis that the plan has changed dramatically since the Certificate of Need was issued.

“The concern here, overall, is the process,” said Mark-Viverito. “There are some legitimate concerns of the residents that, whether it’s 100th Street or 97th Street, it really doesn’t seem to be a good area for the size of this project. One hundred and sixth was a much better location because it was a wider street. A lot of work was put into getting the community to support it.”

But Ethan Geto, who represents JHL, said all of the community’s concerns will be addressed when JHL is ready to release its full plans. He is hoping to organize an open community forum in September or October to answer neighbors’ questions fully.

While he could not confirm that JHL plans to build at the 97th Street site, citing ongoing negotiations, Geto said they are already working to get in front of the community’s potential grievances.

“We are particularly aware of the trepidation about the traffic impacts, so we are prepared to take many mitigation measures that would significantly, dramatically impact traffic,” Geto said. He could not specify what measures would be taken, but some fear that it may involve narrowing the sidewalk to widen the street, which would take away from space for the popular greenmarket held there.

Geto said JHL is planning to construct the building in line with state-of-the-art geriatric care standards created by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Greenhouse Project—not to be conflated with a hothouse for plants or a tricked-out eco-friendly house—lays out plans intended to alleviate the lack of privacy and warehousing feel that some contemporary nursing homes engender. Geto said each resident would have a private room and bathroom that open onto a shared living, kitchen and dining area. Each cluster of rooms will house about 12 people.

According to Geto, JHL decided to abandon plans to build at 100th Street after its architect determined that it would be difficult to adhere to Greenhouse Project standards there.

One of the concerns that community opponents keep repeating is for the safety of the residents of a high-rise nursing home. Unsino questioned how mobility-challenged residents could escape in a fire or other emergency situation.

“That is a total phony issue,” said Geto. “There are many, many health care institutions, particularly hospitals, that are tall buildings that have very sick, frail [people]; sometimes those people are elderly.” He said it was unfair to suggest that JHL would not have plans in place to protect the safety of their residents, and that legally they are obligated to make just such plans. “We cannot have this building built without a complete comprehensive security plan that includes a specific evacuation plan for every resident.”

Geto hopes the community will be open to hearing about JHL’s plans and will be happy to have a cutting-edge elder care facility in their neighborhood. They plan to convene a community working group, and Geto says they won’t hesitate to include their harshest critics in the process.

They might not be able to convince everyone. Unsino says that JHL’s board must have been duped to approve this new plan.

“I think they have been led to believe that this will be a truly state of the art nursing home,” she said. “The ‘urban nursing home of the future’—and I say, God forbid.” area. Each cluster of rooms will house about 12 people.

According to Geto, JHL decided to abandon plans to build at 100th Street after its architect determined that it would be difficult to adhere to Greenhouse Project standards there.

One of the concerns that community opponents keep repeating is for the safety of the residents of a high-rise nursing home. Unsino questioned how mobility-challenged residents could escape in a fire or other emergency situation.

“That is a total phony issue,” said Geto. “There are many, many health care institutions, particularly hospitals, that are tall buildings that have very sick, frail [people]; sometimes those people are elderly.” He said it was unfair to suggest that JHL would not have plans in place to protect the safety of their residents, and that legally they are obligated to make just such plans. “We cannot have this building built without a complete comprehensive security plan that includes a specific evacuation plan for every resident.”

Geto hopes the community will be open to hearing about JHL’s plans and will be happy to have a cutting-edge elder care facility in their neighborhood. They plan to convene a community working group, and Geto says they won’t hesitate to include their harshest critics in the process.

They might not be able to convince everyone. Unsino says that JHL’s board must have been duped to approve this new plan.

“I think they have been led to believe that this will be a truly state of the art nursing home,” she said. “The ‘urban nursing home of the future’—and I say, God forbid.”

### Share and Enjoy:

 [Tweet This Post](#)

Filed under [News](#), [News & Features](#) · Tagged with [News](#), [News & Features](#)

Like

### Add New Comment

Type your comment here.

Post as ...

Showing 0 comments

Sort by Popular now  [Subscribe by email](#)  [Subscribe by RSS](#)

•  Search

## Sign up for the weekly Spirit Blast

Enter Your Email

Sign Up



GO TO: [WWW.WESTSIDESPIRIT.COM](http://WWW.WESTSIDESPIRIT.COM) TO VOTE  
Nomination Deadline is Tuesday, September 6th, 2011.

## Digital Edition

**WEST SIDE SPIRIT** Education: New School on the Block Page 8  
August 5, 2011 Price: \$5.00

In Search of Central Park's Past Page 2

Diving into the Hudson For a Good Cause Page 3

Baking as Art at Soutine's Page 4

**ROBERTA FLACK'S UPPER WEST SIDE**  
*Love Song*  
By Daniel Fabiani Page 4

**Unclean Waters**  
Do 200 million gallons of sewage dumped into the Hudson last week pose a health threat to Upper West Siders? Page 3

**landscape design** ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS • DESIGN CONCEPTS  
**garden building** • STONE & BRICK • CUSTOM CARPENTRY • OUT-  
**horticulture** DOOR KITCHENS • GREEN WALLS & ROOFS •  
PLAYROOMS • STREET TREE BIDS • WATER FEAT-  
URES • LANDSCAPE LIGHTING • ORGANIC PEST CONTROL • BUTTERFLY GARDENS • NATIVE PLANTS

blue globe gardens  
www.bsgardens.com  
212.541.7334



Nominate your school or favorite educator for a Blackboard Award!

easytobook

CLICK HERE

For top New York hotel deals



West Side Spirit

**WestSideSpirit**

New column "Tapped In: Notes from the Neighborhood" w/ tidbits &overheard items from the #UWS: <http://bit.ly/rIID76> What do you think?!

9 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite

Hot off the presses! <http://t.co/QYy9Psv>

9 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite

Holler! RT @nychealthy: RT @nycgov: Did you know? That Central Park is the most visited park in America: <http://bit.ly/nPncpO> @NYCEDC

12 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite

RT @nickconfessore: RT @CityHallNews: Just a couple more before we break 4,000 followers. Please RT and help us get there!

13 hours ago · reply · retweet · favorite



Join the conversation

## Pet of the Month

To submit your pet, send an email with photo attached to [pets@manhattanmedia.com](mailto:pets@manhattanmedia.com) describing in 100 words or less why your animal deserves recognition. We will select **one winner** to appear on our *monthly* pets page. Photos will be judged on factors including cuteness, originality, artistic merit and how compelling the accompanying story is. *Pictures must be at least 300 DPI.*

**Content powered by DirectoryM**

Astoria  
Bayonne  
Bronxville  
Caldwell  
East Orange  
Elizabeth  
Glen Oaks  
Hollis  
Irvington  
Jackson Heights  
Kew Gardens  
Lyndhurst  
Mount Vernon

[Apple Visual Graphics](#)

[About West Side Spirit](#) | [Manhattan Media](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact](#) | [Employment](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) | [Archives](#)

© 2010 [Manhattan Media](#). All rights reserved. [Metro theme](#) by [StudioPress](#) • [WordPress](#) • [XHTML](#) • [Log in](#)