



Hon. Adriano Espaillat,
Congressman
New York District Office
163 West 125th Street, #508
New York, NY 10027

Dear Congressman Espaillat,

At its regularly scheduled General Board Meeting held in hybrid on Thursday, April 17th, 2025, Manhattan Community Board No. 9 passed the following Letter of Support Re: Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. Congressional Grant by vote of unanimous consent with 30 members present.

On behalf of Manhattan Community Board 9, we write to express our support for the FY 2026 Fiscal Year 2026 Community Project Funding Request submitted by Heritage Health and Housing, Inc. Manhattan Community Board 9 (MCB9) encompasses Morningside Hts., Manhattanville, Hamilton Heights and Sugar Hill. In other words, we are West Harlem. Our purpose is to ensure that services are accessible and responsive to the needs of all residents, organizations, businesses, and institutions in West Harlem. The New York City Charter mandates that all community boards advise and inform their respective constituencies on matters relevant to their immediate neighborhood.

Heritage Health and Housing, Inc (HHH) has serviced our Community Board 9/District 7 in Hamilton Heights for over 50 years with housing programs that focus on low to moderate constituents. The organization is working on a renovation project for their landmark building at 1649 Amsterdam Avenue (floors 4 through 7) of their 7-story building expanding from West 141st to 142nd Streets. The Harry Simmons Residence Housing Project renovation will benefit single adults with a history of homelessness. The project plans to upgrade 84 units, create modernized kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, new HVAC system, and common areas to improve existing living conditions for the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) supportive housing program. This program works in partnership with New York City's HPD Housing Program. These supportive housing programs like Heritage's assist our community members with a foundation and a place to call home to thrive and become responsible adults in society. It provides a safe space for those who are unable to afford the rentals or home ownership costs.

Before concluding, it is important to state that this project is being carefully managed with consideration of the community within which the property is positioned – the landmark area of Hamilton Heights. The HHH executives have duly followed the process of working with the landmarks commission which required them to present their plans to Landmarks and Parks Committee of Manhattan Community Board 9. Their presentation with renderings notably featured above the first story limestone surrounds with keystones on the second story, flat-arched lintels with sculpted keystones on the third and fourth stories, flat-arched lintels on the fifth story, and molded drip lintels on the sixth story. Across the seventh floor are arched windows, linked by a continuous limestone band. Individual striped awnings have been installed. Front of each non-historic storefront along Amsterdam Avenue. A rectangular brick structure was built on the roof during the 1980s that contains existing elevator bulkhead. Air conditioning units have

been installed in various windows. The north and south facades are similar, but not identical. It was noted that these relatively narrow building facades at 30 feet and 35 feet wide respectively make it difficult to mask the proposed roof additions. Both facades have painted brick bases and non-historic fire escapes across the center windows. It is further noted that a narrow alley extends along the rear façade.” The building's style, scale, materials, and details are among the features that contribute to the special architectural and character of the historic district.

The applicant seeks to implement the following property restorations:

- Build two new stucco façade bulkheads with painted steel cornices to match existing cornice. This separate residential entry bulkhead will be visible from the street.
- Approximately 60 Solar panels for commercial and residential energy efficiency utilization will be installed on the roof for residential energy efficiency utilization.
- The 4th through 7th or top four floors will be dedicated to housing the single room occupancies that will have a separate entrance, elevator, bulkhead and stairs.
- Remove the non-historic fire escapes and build inner stairs to each bulkhead in addition to a new elevator for the residential entrance. The existing center bulkhead elevator will remain.

Other work scheduled to be performed consists of the following:

- Install a new precast cornice above the storefront to match existing.
- Install a new center entrance door with transom and sidelights.
- Replace several new storefront windows and entrance doors.

- New aluminum dark bronze anodized lower infill panels will be installed at the storefront. Existing storefronts must be painted to match new. The storefront glass will be clear. The new storefront awnings will be burgundy in color.
- Patch spalled stone in Lintel.
- Repair cracked sill.
- Repair step crack in brick and repoint brick.

The Harry Simmons Residence houses individuals from the community who were previously homeless. Heritage Housing program manages 84 of the units in the building and provides direct services to the tenants.

HHH contribution and dedication have been beneficial to the community. These resources from the Community Project Funds (CPF) will help the district continue to flourish with better living conditions, employment opportunities, sustainable and economic development. We affirm our support for this essential services project and the need for the funding for our community.

If you have any questions and/or further information is needed, please do not hesitate contacting the board office at (212) 864-6200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Victor Edwards".

Victor Edwards
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 9