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Mr. Paul S. Bunten
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Dear Mr. Bunten:

On behalf of Jewish Home Lifecare, thank you for your open letter of June 2nd, 2010. Having served elders on the Upper West Side for 161 years, the Jewish Home is proud to call this community our home. We always endeavor to be open with and responsive to our neighbors, whether by hosting community forums, maintaining a Community Advisory Board, making regular presentations to the local Community Board or responding to inquiries such as yours.

It is our goal to continue serving the Upper West Side for many years to come. That is why we have undertaken the complex challenge of rebuilding our Manhattan campus, currently located on West 106th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. Our physical plant—parts of which date back to 1883—has grown increasingly inefficient and exceedingly costly to operate. It has now become imperative that our skilled nursing facility be rebuilt in order to sustain the Jewish Home's critical services to over 3,000 elders in Manhattan every year through our long-term nursing home care, short-term rehabilitation, adult day care and home care programs.

Jewish Home is deeply committed to remaining on the Upper West Side to continue serving the community that has been our home since the 19th century. For years we had planned to rebuild on the site of our long-time 106th Street campus, anticipating that Jewish Home's reconstruction would be financed through a mortgage guaranteed by the federal Department of Housing & Urban Development, our own fundraising and through the sale of a portion of the 106th Street campus to a private developer who would construct a new residential building on a section of the parcel.

However, as a result of the nation's economic turmoil, Jewish Home did not receive a viable offer from a developer that would allow us to rebuild the nursing facility at 106th Street. Despite months of intense negotiations, there was ultimately only one viable offer that would allow Jewish Home to finance the rebuilding of its obsolete facility. Under the terms of this offer Jewish Home would sell its entire campus on West 106th Street

as well as its parking garage on West 107th Street to the Chetrit Group, owners of Park West Village. In turn, a new skilled nursing facility would be constructed on West 100th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues in Park West Village using the site of an existing 180-space accessory parking lot. The size and configuration of the 100th Street lot would allow Jewish Home to build a much more efficient, sustainable building that would better meet its programming needs—as opposed to the irregularly-shaped lot on 106th Street.

As you know, the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) approved Jewish Home's Certificate of Need (CON) for a new skilled nursing facility in September 2008. In doing so, the NYS DOH agreed that Jewish Home's plans to replace its existing facility with a new 408-bed nursing home on the Upper West Side matched the needs of the community for such a facility. The CON application underwent a public review by the New York State Hospital Review and Planning Council (SHRPC).

Jewish Home later submitted an application to modify its original CON to reflect that the new 408-bed facility would be built on West 100th Street—six blocks directly to the south of the original location. Since the number of beds in the facility remained constant, the project cost was essentially unchanged and the Jewish Home could continue serving the health care needs of the frail elders in the community. The DOH accepted the modified CON through a standard administrative procedure.

We are working with our elected officials and the community adjacent to our 106th Street campus to insure that when we relocate the recently-adopted R8A/8B zoning that applies to the surrounding community will govern any future residential development on the site of our current campus. Towards that end, Jewish Home made funds available for the community's engagement of independent counsel to negotiate an enforceable restrictive declaration that will run with the land and legally bind Jewish Home and any future owner to develop the land in accordance with the provisions of the Upper West Side rezoning of 2007.

As you know, the Jewish Home is a not-for-profit institution affiliated with UJA-Federation (United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies). In order to fully finance the rebuilding of our Manhattan skilled nursing facility on 100th Street, the Jewish Home anticipates obtaining a mortgage insured by HUD. The mortgage amount is determined by New York State Department of Health guidelines based on the number of beds in the facility. Once our application for a HUD mortgage is filed, those documents will become publicly available.

The HUD-insured mortgage and the sale of our 106th Street campus will not yield nearly enough funds to construct a new skilled nursing facility; we must additionally raise tens of millions of dollars in philanthropic contributions to construct a new Jewish Home.

In August 2009—shortly following receipt of Chetrit’s offer—Jewish Home made a presentation to its Community Advisory Board to introduce our plan to sell the 106th Street campus and rebuild our nursing home at Park West Village. In September 2009, the Jewish Home presented its preliminary development plans for 100th Street to Community Board 7. The Jewish Home also made the plan publicly accessible on its website, www.jewishhome.org.

Further, Jewish Home held a series of meetings with community stakeholders at Park West Village in order to answer their questions and understand their concerns. In each case, as we learn more about community needs and issues, our insights have been enhanced. To date, Jewish Home has discussed its plans with Park West Village community advocates including the head of the Park West Village Tenants Association; P.S. 163 parents and administrators; representatives of Trinity Lutheran Church; Manhattan Community Board 7; Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer; Assemblymember Danny O’Donnell; City Councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito; The New York Public Library; the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene; Linda Gibbs, the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services; the New York City Department of Design and Construction; and your organization. In light of these ongoing conversations, the Jewish Home has been refining its development plans to address the neighborhood’s top concerns:

- **Preserving open space and providing an upgraded branch library.**

The Jewish Home has been working closely with the City to explore multiple possibilities for shifting the new building’s footprint slightly to the west of the 100th Street parking lot. In one potential scenario, Jewish Home’s new facility would be built partially on the present site of the Bloomingdale Branch of The New York Public Library (NYPL) and an upgraded branch library would be incorporated into the new building. This would enable a portion of the current parking lot to be transformed into landscaped open space that would be fully accessible to the Park West Village community and maintained as open space in perpetuity. An even better scenario would be building the new nursing home on the site of both the Library and the NYC Department of Health Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) property, allowing us to create much more usable open space for the community.

Both plans remain under discussion. It is the hope of Jewish Home that an agreement with the City can be reached that will enable one of these scenarios to come to fruition.

- **Additional space for P.S. 163.** Jewish Home is working closely with parents and administrators at P.S. 163 on plans to build a “pathway to knowledge”— a covered walkway that will connect the school to the new Jewish Home so that students can participate in intergenerational programs with Jewish Home’s elders. The walkway also will be a secure path for students to either the existing Bloomingdale Branch Library or a new, modernized Bloomingdale Branch Library relocated to the nursing home. Having the library securely and

- readily accessible to students also would relieve some overcrowding at P.S. 163 by making it unnecessary for the school to maintain a library in-house.
- **Public meeting space.** Jewish Home is committed to creating an auditorium and meeting rooms that would be available for community use, and will continue to host community and cultural events in its public spaces, including lectures, forums, and concerts. Sharing our space is something that we already do routinely at our West 106th Street campus.
- **Creation of a community advisory board.** Jewish Home will work collaboratively with the residents of Park West Village – as it does with its neighbors at its 106th Street campus – through a broadly representative community advisory board, which will be established to advise Jewish Home on all community-related matters.
- **Minimizing traffic impacts.** Jewish Home is aware of the concerns of Park West Village residents regarding traffic congestion. In designing our new facility at 100th Street we will make every effort to minimize the impact on traffic in the area. The grounds of the new skilled nursing facility will incorporate an off-street driveway and turnaround for nursing home-related vehicles, including ambulances, vans, and delivery trucks—thereby diminishing the impact of any additional traffic on 100th Street. Jewish Home Lifecare will work closely with the community, in consultation with traffic management experts, to further mitigate congestion.

Jewish Home’s new state-of-the-art, environmentally-sustainable nursing facility will feature comfortable resident spaces that will feel like a real home rather than an institution. One of the foremost goals of the redevelopment of Jewish Home is to create an innovative skilled nursing facility that allows long-term care residents to live in a dignified setting with private rooms and considerably more amenities. Each new nursing home floor will house resident “neighborhoods” in which small groups of elders will share a centrally-located kitchen, dining room, and living rooms. These “neighborhoods” will be organized into pairs called “communities” that will share additional common areas such as rehabilitation facilities and space for large-group activities. Elders in these “neighborhoods” and “communities” will prepare communal meals and participate in leisure activities together. In the field of geriatric care, this is known as the “Green House” or “small-house” model for skilled nursing facilities.

In these models, each self-sustaining elder floor will have a dedicated Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)-trained staff supporting it. Jewish Home is working closely with SEIU Health Care Workers Local 1199 (which represents over 600 of our employees in Manhattan) to develop a new staffing model that will increase the number of Jewish Home staff who are trained as CNAs, resulting in additional hours of direct bedside patient care by trained CNAs than the traditional nursing home.

In addition to SEIU Health Care Workers Local 1199, our workforce is also represented by the United Federation of Teachers, the New York State Nurses Association and other unions and professional associations, all of whom are partnering with us in the design of the new facility.

Jewish Home boasts a number of award-winning programs, including its Geriatric Career Development Program (GCD) which recruits high school sophomores into an intensive three-year, out-of-school program designed to train at-risk youth to enter the field of geriatric care. To date, over 235 students have participated in Jewish Home's GCD program and **100% of these students graduated from high school**. These students come from the neighborhoods and schools in close proximity to our Bronx and Manhattan skilled nursing facilities. This year, Jewish Home's GCD Program earned the *Innovation of the Year Award* from the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (NYAHSa).

In its new facility, the Jewish Home will continue its longstanding practice of regularly and voluntarily submitting to a quality survey by The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), the leading independent, not-for-profit accrediting agency that certifies more than 16,000 healthcare organizations and programs in the United States. JCAHO's accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of excellence. As a result of their most recent surveys, JCAHO has awarded their highest ranking—The Gold Seal of Approval—to Jewish Home Lifecare Manhattan, as well as to the Manhattan Home Health Care Program.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ranking system for nursing homes, implemented in late 2008, has been the subject of widespread national disparagement. The CMS system has been criticized by the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA) and thirty-one state Attorneys General have requested that the system be suspended until it is revised to more accurately assess the quality of nursing home care. In addition, the new national Health Care Reform Act calls for re-evaluation of the CMS ranking system.

Notwithstanding their flawed rating system, Jewish Home Lifecare's Manhattan campus received four out of five possible stars from CMS for "Quality" for the clinical care we provide. And despite the pervasive objections to CMS's ranking system, with respect to any criterion for which we did not receive a high score we view the CMS ratings as helpful benchmarks for the development of Best Practices. Indeed, we already have implemented concrete measures to review and revise procedures and policies in connection with the CMS ratings.

The Jewish Home looks forward to rebuilding its nursing home at Park West Village—not only to pioneer an innovative model for elder care, but also to forge a new model of collaboration between an institution and its neighbors. As we continue to conduct our due diligence and refine our redevelopment plans, the Jewish Home will keep you and your organization posted on our plans. We look forward to hearing your ideas and concerns about the building project and how to best serve the elders of the Upper West Side.

Thank you again for writing to us. I look forward to continuing a dialogue with you and all the residents of Park West Village in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,

Audrey S. Weiner, DSW, MPH
President and Chief Executive Officer