

# Big Ideas for Small Lots NYC Housing Design Competition

## Q+A Addendum 2

**Competition Launch Date:** February 1, 2019  
**Q+A Addendum 1 Release Date:** February 15, 2019  
**Q+A Addendum 2 Release Date:** March 8, 2019

Corrections – Page 15 of the Appendix to the Design Brief indicated that the St. Mark’s Avenue and East New York Avenue site is on Block 1445. The correct Block is 1455. Page 17 of the Appendix to the Design Brief indicated incorrect zoning district, lot area, lot frontage, and lot depth for the Metropolitan Avenue site. The correct zoning district is R2/HS. The correct lot area is 1,500 sf. The correct lot frontage is 15 feet, and the correct lot depth is 100 feet. The Design Brief document available on the [Big Ideas for Small Lots NYC website](#) has been updated accordingly as of March 8, 2019.

Questions and Answers – Enclosed are questions and answers that were sent to [BISLNYC@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:BISLNYC@hpd.nyc.gov) up to and including February 22, 2019.

### Zoning and Site Data

**1. Are there any photographs of the site or of the original building that occupied the subject site?**

No photographs are available at this time.

**2. Do the walls of the buildings on adjacent properties encroach upon the subject property (i.e. were they at one time party walls)? Do you want to establish a nominal width that everyone can work to?**

No survey of the Subject Site is available at this time. Respondents should make assumptions as appropriate based on the available information, their expertise, and knowledge. We are not establishing a nominal width for the competition.

**3. Can the lots on South Railroad Street A/B or the two lots on Hancock Street be merged?**

No.

**4. Where is front lot line located with respect to the street walls of the adjacent buildings?**

No surveys are available at this time. For the purpose of Stage I of the competition, respondents should assume that the adjacent street walls (building walls facing the street of adjacent properties) are setback approximately 10 feet from their respective street lines (front lot lines separating the lot from the street).

**5. Please confirm if the subject site is classified as R7A or R7B?**

The applicable zoning district for the Subject Site is R7-2. R7-2 is a distinct zoning district with height and setback regulations distinct from the height and setback requirements in R7A or R7B districts. R7A and R7B are required to comply with quality housing regulations, as stipulated in the New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) 23-011 (a), while per ZR 23-011 (b), buildings in R7-2 districts may choose to comply with quality housing regulations.

**6. Is there any height limitation or recommended height for the Submissions that are using sky exposure plane regulations?**

Submissions may use quality housing program zoning regulations or height factor and sky exposure zoning regulations to determine height requirements. Please see ZR 23-641, ZR 23-642, and ZR 23-692 for more detailed information on the underlying height and setback regulations for buildings in R7-2 districts that choose to utilize height factor and sky exposure plane requirements. Note that for buildings that choose to utilize Quality Housing Program requirements, please see ZR 23-60, ZR 23-661, and ZR 23-692.

**7. Please confirm that the Subject Site is located on a narrow street beyond 100 feet of a wide street?**

The Subject Site is located on a narrow street beyond 100 feet of a wide street. Respondents may refer to NYC Zoning and Land Use Application (ZoLa) for street width information for other sites.

**8. Could you provide an example of what table is required to illustrate zoning conformance and compliance?**

Two separate zoning tables are provided as examples in Appendix A of this addendum which can be downloaded separately. One table is for designs utilizing quality housing program requirements and the other table is for designs utilizing height factor/sky exposure plane requirements. Respondents may provide their own zoning tables, which at a minimum must include (1) the zoning resolution section, (2) a description of the requirement, (3) what is permitted/required, and (4) what is proposed.

**9. Please provide or confirm the following zoning: (1) the maximum lot coverage under Quality Housing, (2) the maximum allowable FAR under Quality housing for the site, (3) the site is located outside an inclusionary zone, (4) density requirements, (5) the site is not located in a district where special heights with a qualifying ground floor can be provided, (6) side yards are required, (7) can balconies protrude beyond the lot line, (8) bedrooms face the rear yard, and (9) a qualifying ground floor counts as floor area.**

Please refer to the NYC Zoning Resolution for applicable requirements. Respondents may additionally refer to [New York City's Department of City Planning Zoning Districts and Tools Overview](#). Respondents may also refer to but should not solely rely upon the inclusion of specific sections listed in the [Appendix A Tables](#).

**10. How does one determine the FAR requirement for this project? How much of this lot is buildable area? Are there front and rear setback requirements? Do we have to match both the front yard and the base height of the adjacent buildings, on either side of the site? Do we need to keep a 74.5 to 84.5 building to land ratio?**

Please refer to the NYC Zoning Resolution for applicable requirements. Respondents may additionally refer to [New York City's Department of City Planning Zoning Districts and Tools Overview](#). Respondents may also refer to but should not solely rely upon the inclusion of specific sections listed in the [Appendix A Tables](#).

**11. The zoning resolution offers bonus FAR and other incentives for Affordable Housing. Will the Submissions be evaluated with the benefit of these incentives?**

The Jury will evaluate Submissions according to the Competitive Criteria in section VI of the Design Brief. Zoning incentives or bonuses may be utilized, as applicable, per the Zoning Resolution.

**12. Will any variation in FAR, yards or lot coverage be considered as a possibility?**

Submissions that do not comply with the existing zoning regulations must provide a reasonable justification and explain how any such modification(s) of the zoning strengthen(s) the Submission's ability to satisfy the Competitive Criteria.

**13. Does the competition committee or the Mayor's Office intend to go to the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals for zoning variances if proposals do not comply with zoning?**

All land-use and other entitlement processes will be addressed during Stage II in consultation with the Finalists.

## Programmatic Requirements

### **14. Are designs for uses other than residential use accepted? Is a community center/ community space an acceptable use to include in the program?**

Per Section V of the Design Competition Brief, only residential uses may be proposed.

### **15. Is co-living an option for the program use?**

Co-living may be considered.

### **16. Can you clarify how ADA compliance would be applied to a multi-family affordable housing? Do all units have to comply with ADA? Is an elevator required under the ADA? Can an argument be made that because of the odd lot size and the need for affordable housing being so high, these units could be designed not to ADA code? Are we mandated to propose a structure that is ADA compliant since the neighboring structures feature a first floor raised above street level with a stoop entrance?**

Submissions must comply with ADA, as applicable, regardless of the lot size, adjacent conditions and/or the need for affordable housing. The applicability of certain ADA requirements for multi-unit buildings varies according to unit configurations and other Submission details. Please refer to the helpful links on the competition website, including pages 6 thru 8 of the [HPD Design Guidelines](#) for additional guidance on design and accessibility.

### **17. Are residential units required by the competition to be accessible? Is the competition receptive to proposals offering a Type A wheelchair accessible unit on the ground floor, with the remaining units being reached via stairs? Will this be considered sufficient to meet the needs of the various prospective tenants, or is elevator access to upper floors a requirement? Are duplex units discouraged due to accessibility reasons, or encouraged due to the historic precedent of duplex units in affordable housing in NYC?**

Submissions must comply with all current regulations, codes, and ordinances, including, but not limited to: New York City Construction Codes; New York City Housing Maintenance Code; New York State Multiple Dwelling Law, as applicable; Fair Housing Act, as applicable; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as applicable; Americans with Disabilities Act, as applicable; and any other applicable regulations. Please refer to the helpful links on the competition website, including pages 6 through 8 of the [HPD Design Guidelines](#) for additional guidance on Design and Accessibility.

**18. Are elevators required? Does a three-unit building require a second means of egress?**

Please refer to the New York City Building Code. For further clarification on elevator requirements, Respondents may refer to the [NYC Department of Buildings Buildings Bulletin 2017-008](#).

**19. If the proposed building design has four or more dwelling units, must it comply with the Fair Housing Act design guidelines for accessible routes, kitchens, and bathrooms?**

All new construction housing projects built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991 consisting of four or more units are required to comply with the design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

**20. Are accessible units preferred?**

Submissions will be evaluated according to the Competitive Criteria in Section VI of the Design Brief.

**21: Do we have to follow HPD Design Guidelines room size and width requirements. Will the project ultimately need to meet HPD Design Guidelines for New Construction?**

For the purpose of Stage I of this competition, Submissions do not need to follow [HPD Design Guidelines](#). The guidelines are provided as a useful reference on the competition helpful links webpage but they will be not used directly as part of the evaluation criteria. Unit size guidelines will not ultimately be applied to these projects.

**22. Is the objective of the competition to design a single-family house or a multi-family building? Will a proposal be judged more favorably if it opts for a multi-family scheme which houses a greater number of users? Is the primary goal of the competition about the design/infill of odd lots or adding density?**

Submissions will be evaluated according to the Competitive Criteria stated in Section VI of the Design Brief. The goals of the competition are outlined in Section II of the Design Brief. As noted in the First Addendum, Respondents may propose more than two units and/or units that do not meet the size of dwelling units or density requirements per section 23-20 of the NYC Zoning Resolution. Respondents that do so must provide a reasonable justification and an explanation as to how any proposed zoning non-compliances strengthens the proposal's ability to satisfy the Competitive Criteria. Goals of the competition are outlined in Section II of the Design Brief.

**23. Will the proposed units be for sale or for rent? Would the City continue to manage them? What is the envisioned ownership structure of the project upon completion?**

There are no programmatic requirements in Stage I beyond what is specified in the Design Brief. Ownership and management structure will be addressed in Stage II of the competition in consultation with the Finalists.

**24. Is there a target unit count or density per acre that the competition is seeking, or a target unit square footage range based on number of bedrooms?**

There are no programmatic requirements in Stage I beyond what is specified in the Design Brief.

**25. In the Competitive Criteria labeled “Replicability,” what does “Adaptability of unit layout to different users” mean? Does this refer to growing families, and the potential to combine apartments? Is there a target unit mix, proportionally, between studios, 1-bedrooms, 2-bedrooms etc., or any preference in the criteria among these types of units?**

“Adaptability of unit layout to different users” may be interpreted broadly and elaborated upon by the Respondent. There are no programmatic requirements in Stage I beyond what is specified in the Design Brief.

**26. Is the design occupant/occupants self-defined?**

Yes. Note there are no programmatic requirements in Stage I beyond what is specified in the Design Brief.

**27. Does this affordable housing need any specific program? What definition/levels of “affordable” will be used in the evaluation of the different submissions?**

Proposals will be evaluated on the Competitive Criteria outlined in Section VI Competitive Criteria. Housing is considered affordable to end-users if it costs about one-third or less of what the people living there make. This stock includes publicly subsidized units, rent-regulated units, public housing operated by NYCHA, and privately-owned units. Please refer to HPD’s website for more information. There are no programmatic requirements in Stage I beyond what is specified in the Design Brief, including affordability levels for end-users.

**28. Should this project be designed as transition housing or for long term housing?**

Submissions should be designed for permanent housing (long-term housing).

**29. Are live/work units considered a residential use per the Design Brief?**

All dwelling units must be considered Use Group 1 or Use Group 2 per the NYC Zoning Resolution.

## Construction, Costs, and Budget

### **30. Could you provide more information as to the level of detail required for the proposed budget?**

For Stage I of the competition, Respondents should discuss the budget in the narrative. In doing so, Respondents may choose to highlight strategies, cost considerations, or other aspects of their Submission that demonstrate how their proposal leverages construction costs savings per the Competitive Criteria. Respondents should provide an estimate of the total construction costs and construction costs per square foot. Respondents are not required to provide detailed trade payments or line-item budgets at this time but may opt to do so.

### **31. Could you provide a helpful link where we can find standard construction prices in NYC?**

While we are not requiring a standard for construction prices, Respondents may refer to the [Turner and Townsend International Construction Market Survey](#) and the NYC Building Congress February 2019 [NYC Construction Costs Report](#) as a resource. Note that the costs outlined in these reports may not be reflective of the contemplated building type a Respondent may be proposing. Respondents should make assumptions as appropriate based on the available information, their expertise, and knowledge.

### **32. Is “affordable” housing considered “affordable” for the end users/occupiers based on their AMI (area median income) and the monthly rent they can afford to pay? Or, is “affordable” referring to the cost of building per sq. ft., which would make the development cost effective for whoever is building it?**

Affordable housing is based on the end-users. Housing is considered affordable if it costs about one-third or less of what the people living there make. This stock includes publicly subsidized units, rent-regulated units, public housing operated by NYCHA, and privately-owned units. Note that Submissions will be evaluated according to the Competitive Criteria in Section VI of the Design Brief, including but not limited to Construction Feasibility.

### **33. Is there a budget limitation or target range that defines a project as affordable?**

There is no budget limitation or target range. However, Submissions will be evaluated according to the Competitive Criteria in Section VI of the Design Brief, including but not limited to construction feasibility.

### **34. Is a development pro-forma expected at this point of the competition?**

No.

**35. Would a net-zero building, which may have more expensive construction costs per sq. ft. but save its occupier maintenance and energy costs over the long term, be considered affordable?**

Design value will be evaluated holistically. Respondents should incorporate measures that are cost efficient over the life of the building into their discussion of the budget in the Project Narrative.

**36. Is there a preferred construction method?**

No.

**Other**

**37. Can bigger picture zoning changes/code changes/policy changes be implemented as part of the design strategy for competition (e.g. taxing unoccupied units in the city to help subsidize affordable housing)?**

No.

**38. Could you please explain the level of detail we should consider for “Materiality and construction” and “Building performance and sustainability measures” in the Project Narrative.**

In addressing materiality and construction, Respondents should specify the materials and intended general construction system as well as any additional special construction that is intrinsic to the design. Respondents are allowed leeway as to what additional details they deem appropriate. The respondent should note any particular measures that have been incorporated into the design that address building performance or sustainability, and/or any particular targets that the buildings will achieve.

**39. Where would I find information on how many lots the City (HPD) has designated as “small lots” in total? Is there a more detailed survey, maps, or metrics available?**

There is no data that is specific to small lots. There is more general publicly available data as required by [NYC Local Law 44](#). Additionally, you may access the [Housing New York map](#) below, which displays HPD units, buildings, and projects counted toward the Housing New York plan.

**40. How would a Respondent that does not include a New York State Registered architect or professional engineer proceed in Stage II?**

If your team is selected as a Finalist, but does not include a New York State registered architect or professional engineer, then you must have a New York State registered architect or engineer join your team for Stage II of the competition in order to continue participating.



**41. Can teams work with any developer they may know or do they need to work with an HPD pre-approved developer?**

Finalists will be invited to further develop their Submissions into development proposals pursuant to a Stage II brief that lays out criteria and requirements, including further guidance on requirements for assembling a Development Team. There is no list of pre-approved HPD developers at this time, but the Development Team assembled by the Finalist will be subject to HPD review and approval.

**42. What are the main guidelines of the HPD development process?**

Please refer to HPD's webpage for general information about [HPD's development process](#).

**43. What is the typical cap rate of HPD development projects?**

Cap rates for HPD financed projects vary depending on multiple factors, including but not limited to the geography of a project, financing program(s), condition of building, and income streams.

**44. I am not a resident of NYC. Would it be possible to communicate via skype for remote workshop and meeting if I am selected as a finalist?**

HPD and AIA will endeavor to make appropriate accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

**45. Can you clarify the submission package requirements? It says there is a maximum of five 11x17 sheets for the project narrative, but it doesn't specify the size and number of sheets for the rest of the drawings. Do the five 11x17's include the actual drawings as well? Is there a maximum number of total sheets?**

(This answer further elaborates on a question answered in the First Addendum). Required Drawings are to be submitted in addition to the Project Narrative. All materials should be formatted in 11" by 17" sheets/pages and contained in one PDF file. The number of total sheets/pages varies depending on (1) how many levels are proposed for the Subject Site, (2) how many drawings are provided to demonstrate replicability across one or more sites from the Design Brief Appendix, and (3) the number of drawings submitted within each sheet (e.g. one may opt to have a zoning table and an axonometric drawing placed together on one sheet). For the Required Drawings component, Respondents may not submit drawings beyond what is specified in the Design Brief. Respondents may include visuals, including additional drawings, in the Project Narrative component.

**46. When the adjacent building has a party wall with window openings without any setback facing directly onto the subject site, are the new proposals to take these openings into account? Or would it be permissible to "seal up" these openings?**

For the purpose of this competition, Respondents may assume that lot line windows may be sealed.

**47. Will the proposals be reviewed anonymously?**

Yes. Submission Materials must not include names, logos or any other identifying feature. File name conventions specified in the First Addendum should also be adhered to. When you login to OpenWater and click on “my applications,” there is a number between the program name and category. This number is a unique identifier and should be used as the file name.

**48. For the additional “replicability demonstration” drawing requirement, can any of the included sites be chosen for this? Is there any requirement for what the format of this drawing should be (section, plan, etc.)?**

At least one additional site that is of a different site typology must be considered to demonstrate how the design for the Subject Site can be adapted to a variety of site typologies as exemplified by the additional twenty-two sites in the Appendix. The type of drawing(s) is at the discretion of the Respondent.

**49. Is there a required sheet/page orientation?**

No.

**50. For final presentation PDF, should the drawing be Construction Documents drawings (ranging from A0.01 to A9.01 with title blocks) or simply plans/elevations/others to be organized on slideshow?**

This is at the discretion of the Respondent.

**51. Are we allowed to go below grade?**

Yes, as per all applicable regulations, codes, and ordinances.

**52. Shall it be assumed that this affordable housing proposal is to be funded to some degree by a federal program/entity such as HUD?**

At this time, no specific funding sources need be assumed.

**53. Are we allowed to have a member of our team be someone who has worked as a consultant for the company that a jury member is a part of? Either in the past or presently?**

Yes, as long as the team member works in a consultant role and is not an employee/ employer, associate, or partner of a member of the Jury.

**54. Are we to assume the chimneys are to be removed? And if not, can our building wrap around the chimneys with the 1” setback on all three sides or does a straight line have to be held from the smallest point?**

Respondents should make assumptions as appropriate based on the available information, their expertise, and knowledge.

**55. What is the “affordable housing lottery?”**

Please refer to [HPD’s Marketing webpage](#).

**56. What consideration is being paid to the owners of the abutting properties of these parcels? How will community input be incorporated in ‘winning’ the Award? How are you incorporating neighborhood needs in your criteria and finalist award?**

Submissions will be evaluated, amongst other criteria, on the design’s ability to respond to site conditions and how well the proposed materials, massing, fenestration, façade articulation, and other design elements respond to the neighborhood context. For Stage I, Submissions are design proposals. HPD and the Finalist will conduct community engagement at an appropriate time.

**57. Why was an auction of the individual parcels not pursued as in years past?**

HPD and the City are seeking proposals through the design competition in furtherance of the goals stated in the Design Brief.

**58. Can you explain your thinking in lumping these lots together in this singular competition since the location of the sites are located in differing contexts?**

The lots in the Appendix represent a variety of site typologies. The Submission Requirements and Competitive Criteria in the Design Brief address the goal of demonstrating feasible, replicable housing solutions across various site and neighborhood conditions.