



GRAMERCY PARK BLOCK ASSOCIATION, INC.

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To: Our Neighbors on Gramercy Park
From: Arlene Harrison, President, Gramercy Park Block Association
Date: May 5, 2005
Subject: Update on Neighborhood Concerns

Many of you have contacted me in the past few weeks on a variety of topics of concern. Among the issues most mentioned are the Con Edison/Gramercy Park Hotel steam pipe excavation, the fumes and noise coming from a diesel oil truck in front of 60 Gramercy Park North, the lack of telephone service of some residents on the north side of the Park, the street light that is out near 60 Gramercy Park North, the security in the walkways surrounding the Gramercy Park Hotel construction site, and the traffic emergency situation at the intersection on Lexington Avenue and Gramercy Park North.

Although most of the calls have come from residents of 60 Gramercy Park North and One Lexington Avenue, residents from several other buildings on the north side and residents of all the buildings on the west side of the Park have recently contacted me.

Information System to the Residents on Gramercy Park

I have informal daily meetings with the Hotel management, the Bovis construction field supervisor and with the Con Ed site supervisor, and we have a cohesive team in place. When you communicate with me by e-mail at the address above, I take your messages with me to these meetings. The Block Association has an information distribution system in every building on the Park. You can be sure that your concerns will be addressed immediately, and that our memos with answers to your concerns will be distributed to every resident on Gramercy Park, or will be answered quickly by me in a telephone call back to you.

Gramercy Park Hotel/Con Edison Excavation Site

During the past couple of weeks, the Gramercy Park West excavation project has caused a great deal of concern because of the tremendous noise it creates, exacerbated by the lack of advanced knowledge about what is going on at this site. I met with the Con Edison supervisor and learned that the Gramercy Park Hotel is installing a steam line that will provide an alternative source of fuel for their boiler system. The Hotel is changing its heating, hot-water and air conditioning to a steam-based system, which is more efficient and environmentally friendly. It is Con Edison electricity that produces the steam and installs the steam pipe. The new steam main will go from Gramercy Park South, across Gramercy Park West to Gramercy Park North. Since I felt people would want to know exactly where the excavation would be, I asked the crew manager to outline it for me. He indicated where it would be by outlining it with orange spray paint. Soon they will excavate right up onto the sidewalk in front of 60

Gramercy Park North, a few feet short of the doctor's office on the ground floor on the right side of the entrance to the building. Bovis is now working with Con Edison to create a logistics plan about the work on the sidewalk. As soon as we have the details of this plan we will get back to you.

The good news is that several buildings that now have oil-based systems will be able to tap into this new steam system. Those buildings include 60 Gramercy Park North, the Calvary Church Parish Hall and the Church itself, as well as the buildings on the south side of the Park and the west side of the Park.

I have learned some of the benefits of a steam-based system. A steam-based system takes up about 1/10th of the room in your basement of an oil-based system as you no longer need an oil tank and furnace. You therefore have additional room in your basement for other purposes. Another benefit is that you don't have an oil truck delivering oil and holding up traffic. Also, Con Ed will maintain and repair your system on a 24/7 basis.

When the Con Ed construction is complete, any building that wants to explore the idea of tapping into this steam-based system should call me, and I will provide you with the name of someone from Con Ed who will meet with your building board to explain the system.

Hours of Operation at the Construction Site

The official work hours that the building permit allows at the Gramercy Park II hotel construction site is from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. If the construction crew needs to work outside these hours, they can only do so by obtaining an additional specific permit. Last week, we received several calls that the construction noise began at 6:45 a.m. Some residents of One Lexington Avenue, 45 and 48 Gramercy Park North have also complained to us that there are large trucks and a great deal of noise at the site during some nights. I was told in my meeting this morning that whatever noise people are hearing at night does not come from vehicles connected with the construction, but they will still look into this for us as they have security personnel patrolling the walkways all through the night.

Fumes and Noise from a Diesel Oil Truck

Last Friday, a diesel oil truck was parked for many hours in front of 60 Gramercy Park North. Both the fumes and the noise were very disturbing to the residents. I learned that they were cleaning the boiler at the Hotel to make way for the new steam system. The Hotel management has now assured me that if anything like this should happen again, they will try to give me advance warning so that I can alert you.

Disruption of Telephone Service

Recently, there was a problem at 60 Gramercy Park North with telephone service. In at least one case, a resident had no service for five days. Verizon was called and since many telephone wires go from the street into the Gramercy Park Hotel basement first, the Verizon repair people immediately went there. They discovered that some of the wires had been wet and were not working. I have accordingly asked the hotel to contact Verizon about a plan that will protect these wires from now on. Bovis informs me that such a plan is now in place. They have enclosed the switch and put a local roof over it. The Hotel's telephone contractor is cleaning decades of filth from that switch and going forward there should not be additional disruption of telephone service.

Security in the Walkways Surrounding the Gramercy Park Hotel

I continue to work with the hotel management on improving the security in the walkways, both on Gramercy Park North and on Lexington Avenue. The Hotel assured me that they are stepping up their security patrols, and requiring security guards to be particularly alert to trespassers, vagrants, illegal drug activity, and unsafe conditions such as broken glass, lights that are out and vandalism. I will continue to monitor this very closely and ask that you contact me if there are any problems you wish to report.

Further Demolition and Dust

Complaints about the dust coming in the windows on Gramercy Park North from the demolition have been frequent, and in the next few weeks there will be additional demolition on the north side of the Park on the bridge connecting the Annex to the Hotel. The top floors of this connecting bridge will be removed and only the two bottom floors connecting the two will remain. Also, chimneys between the two buildings will be coming down. The demolition work on the Hotel is still in progress. They have promised to try to continue watering down as much of the dust as is possible. I spoke with Bovis supervisor this morning about continued complaints about dust from the demolition site. He will meet with the demolition contractor tomorrow and reinforce the continued need to water down the dust. We will both monitor this closely going forward.

Graffiti

In the last couple of weeks, graffiti has been appearing on the walls of the walkways around the construction site. The Bovis team is committed to painting over this eye sore on a daily basis. We are working with the 13th Precinct and the Bovis team to try to stop this from happening.

Traffic Concerns

Several people from 60 Gramercy Park North have contacted me this week with concerns that the scaffolding on 21st street is making it difficult to see on-coming traffic when they get out of a cab, unload their cars or attempt to cross the street. One resident complained that they were almost hit because "traffic can't see us either." I have asked the Con Ed supervisor to provide our community with a flag man to direct traffic at that location. They have indicated that they will do so.

Parking on the West Side of the Street

Some have complained about having fewer parking spaces in our community because of the construction. In a couple of weeks, it shall be possible to park again on the west side of the street.

Defective Street lights on Gramercy Park

Since the Bishop Crook street lights were installed several years ago, many of them have been out for months at a time in one location or another on Gramercy Park. It was reported to me by a resident of 60 GPN that the street light on Gramercy Park North, between Park Avenue South and Gramercy Park West has been out for months. Since that is the only street light before you reach the one before 60 GPN, it is very dark there. In addition, there is scaffolding at that location on the Parish Hall of Calvary Church which adds to the problem. I called 311 and reported that this light was not working. I was transferred to the Department of Transportation Street Light Defect Unit, and upon giving them the exact location, I was given a service request number for future reference. The number in this case is 1005111. The policy is that DOT will

inspect a defective street light within 10 days after a report is made. It can then take up to 30 days to repair a light. If anyone at 60 GPN or anywhere else wants to check on the status of this particular light, he or she should call 311 and give them the service call request number above. That is also the formula for reporting any street lights on Gramercy Park that are not working.

Traffic

I am pleased to tell you that Community Board 6 has overwhelmingly approved the traffic recommendations worked on by the Gramercy Park Block Association and the Trustees of Gramercy Park to address the emergency public safety traffic situation at the intersection of Lexington Avenue and Gramercy Park North. I am attaching an article that appeared in the April 28th edition of Town & Village newspaper that will bring you up to date on this matter.

Website

If you wish to find out more about the new residential building that the Schragger team is building at 50 Gramercy Park North, you can visit their website at www.50gramercyparknorth.com.

If you have additional concerns that you would like me to address, please e-mail me at arlenesharrison@yahoo.com. If you are not able to do so, please call me at (212) 260-3875. I am here to help you.