

Building the Cardboard City of Tomorrow

EMILY M. BERNSTEIN

New York Times (1857-Current file); Sep 26, 1993; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2003) pg. CY8

U P P E R W E S T S I D E



Building the Cardboard City of Tomorrow

In a crowded room on the ground floor of the New School, a team of urban planners is building an elaborate cardboard city meant to help create a consensus about new construction around Lincoln Center.

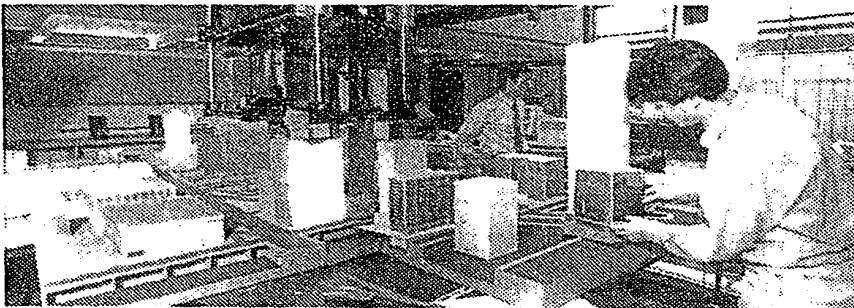
The model, with scale photographs of the real facades attached to cardboard buildings, reconstructs the character of the neighborhood — from 59th to 70th Street and from Amsterdam Avenue to Central Park West — in vivid detail. A thin camera lens “walks” through the model, projecting views of the area onto a screen.

“You will be able to come in and we can show you what it looks like from your window,” said Michael Kwartler, the director of the Environmental Simulation Center at the New School.

For each of six sites considered prime for new development, there will be three different renditions of buildings — one built under current zoning laws, one under a new proposal by the City Planning Department and one under a counter-proposal by neighborhood groups including Community Board 7 and Landmark West!

The zoning in the Lincoln Center area has come under review because of a 545-foot building under construction on the block between 67th and 68th Streets and Broadway and Columbus Avenues.

The building, which is being developed by Millennium Partners and Lincoln Square Partners, will include 10 movie theaters, a post office and



Marilynn K. Yee/The New York Times

With Michael Kwartler, Nicole Comp makes a model of Lincoln Center.

an eight-story health club, in addition to condominiums intended primarily to cater to foreign businessmen.

What has attracted attention is that everything about the building, which inspired complaints from nearby residents and a lawsuit, is allowed under the zoning for the Special Lincoln Square District. The district was created in 1969 to foster the area's development.

As a result, the Planning Department acknowledged the need for new guidelines, which it presented in June.

The community board and Landmark West! would like to see stricter zoning than the city has proposed. They advocate height limits on new buildings and guidelines for facades to conform to neighboring buildings. In addition, they want planners to consider the impact each new development would have on an already-

crowded area.

Landmark West! originally commissioned the detailed physical model and raised the money to finance it.

“I hope this alleviates some of the confusion in the community, because it is meant as an educational tool,” said Arlene Simon, president of Landmark West!

“But I would also like to be able to have the Department of City Planning understand what the actual impact of these buildings is.”

Mr. Kwartler of the New School said he is trying to convince the owners of the development sites in question to participate in the project, and the owners of the Mayflower Hotel site have already agreed. The Planning Department is also contributing designs, and plans to use the model in the public review process.

EMILY M. BERNSTEIN