

## Planning in Lincoln Square

With more than \$50 million of new commercial and residential construction sparked by Lincoln Center completed around Lincoln Square since 1963 and \$60 million more in the construction and drawing stage, it has become apparent to the city's planners that some kind of order—both functional and esthetic—must be imposed on the area. The attitude of the developers as crisis is compounded is strictly business as usual.

The city's answer is its Lincoln Square special zoning district proposal, scheduled for Board of Estimate consideration today. It involves a set of planning guidelines that would control building density and the arrangement and height of construction on Broadway, opposite Lincoln Center; notable are such special design features as a continuous Broadway arcade and a system of open and closed pedestrian passages and plazas.

The plan is meant to direct the district's growth constructively, according to an established pattern which would insure its character, services and circulation and provide amenities that are never included in any speculator package. It is the fruit of joint long-term studies by the city and the Lincoln Square Community Council.

To offset the extra cost of these special features, builders are offered zoning "bonuses" of more floor space for their inclusion. A whole series of straw men has been raised against this "incentive zoning" by its opponents; these range from freedom of design to charges of potential abuse of discretionary controls. "Discretion" is spelled out in the most specific detail in the guidelines and bonuses. The alternative is a disaster area.

It is already obvious that private developers are hoping to sabotage the proposal through a divide-and-conquer operation inside city government. They show no intention of letting considerations of civic good interfere with their well-established city wrecking prerogatives, no matter what guarantees are offered that they will not lose by cooperating with the planners. One developer's plan made public this week would blatantly dump a gross, nonconforming, conventional monster onto Broadway in the tortured name of freedom of design.

The future, literally, hangs on the Board of Estimate. It will be putting the city's house in order by approving this excellent and long overdue attempt at reasoned development in behalf of all the people. Rejection will mean an open field for special interests.