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Breaking Ground Begins Conversion of Former Student Dorm into 434-units of Supportive and Affordable Housing in East Harlem

1760 Third Avenue will serve formerly homeless youth, adults, seniors, and low-income households



MANHATTAN, NEW YORK – Breaking Ground, New York’s largest supportive housing developer, today began construction on converting a 19-story former student dorm at 1760 Third Avenue into 434 units of much-needed supportive and affordable housing in East Harlem, Manhattan. Prior to Breaking Ground’s acquisition of the property in summer 2024, 1760 Third Avenue was used as a dormitory by Hunter College and Baruch College, making it the organization’s fifth adaptive reuse project in New York City. Construction for the project will take approximately 18 to 24 months.

“Transforming underutilizing buildings like 1760 Third Avenue into much-needed affordable and supportive housing is an unparalleled opportunity – not only for the individuals who will soon call it home but also for the future of adaptive reuse development in our city,” said **Brenda Rosen, President and CEO of Breaking Ground**. “We are grateful that our public and private sector partners

share our vision to create hundreds of safe, stable homes while preserving and revitalizing existing infrastructure. As we begin renovations, we mark an exciting milestone in our commitment to expanding services in Harlem and ensuring more New Yorkers have access to the housing and support they need.”

Located between East 97th and 98th Streets, 1760 Third Avenue will reserve 261 of 434 total units for individuals exiting homelessness, including a subset of 40 units for young adults aging out of foster care or who have experienced homelessness. The balance of 172 units will be set aside for households with incomes at or less than 60% of the area median income. One unit is reserved for an onsite superintendent. Each apartment will be refreshed, fitted with kitchenettes and furnished so that residents exiting homelessness to an apartment have a home from day one. The building will feature amenities such as a multi-purpose room, a fitness center, a computer lab, a medical suite, as well as office space for Breaking Ground's property management and social services teams.

Breaking Ground will serve as the property manager and provide onsite supportive services to formerly homeless residents. Services will include case management, onsite medical and mental health care, benefits and entitlement counseling, connections to employment, and more. Through Breaking Ground’s signature Tenant360 program, tenant services coordinators will also create recreational, educational, and social enrichment opportunities for residents year-round. Funding for services will be provided by contracts with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH).

Completed in 1974, 1760 3rd Avenue was originally developed as the Florence Nightingale Nursing Center. It was subsequently converted to a student dormitory in 2007, largely hosting international students attending a variety of New York City private and public colleges and universities.

1760 Third Avenue was acquired by Breaking Ground for \$172 million in June of 2024. The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) provided \$126 million for the acquisition, alongside additional funding from the New York City Acquisition Fund, the Low Income Investment Fund, Resolution A funds through the New York City Council, and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance/Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation (OTDA/HHAC).

Financing for the renovation and refitting of apartments is provided in part by 501(c)3 bonds issued by New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), with additional loans and grants from HCR, OMH, and OTDA/HHAC. Wells Fargo is providing the construction letter of credit. Dattner Architects is the project architect and Archstone Builders LLC is the general contractor.

In addition to public and private financing, Breaking Ground received philanthropic support for 1760 3rd Avenue from the Wells Fargo Foundation and Ilse Melamid. The Wells Fargo Foundation’s grant will assist in outfitting the building’s computer lab, medical suite, and fitness room to ensure that tenants have access to holistic health and digital literacy services. A significant major gift from Ilse Melamid will ensure that Breaking Ground is able to establish apartments and specialized services for 40 young adults who are aging out of foster care or who have experienced homelessness.

“By investing state resources into communities like Harlem, we can create the modern, affordable apartments that New Yorkers need,” **New York Governor Kathy Hochul said.** “This development on

Third Avenue will bring new life to a vacant building by transforming it into affordable apartments that over 400 households will be able to enjoy for generations to come."

"This \$264 million development is a testament to the power of innovation in addressing New York's housing crisis," said **New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas**. "By transforming this former college dorm into affordable and supportive homes, we can provide security, stability, and a way forward for more than 430 individuals, families, and young people in need. 1760 Third Avenue exemplifies the Governor's commitment to creating housing opportunities that are accessible, sustainable, and supportive for all New Yorkers, particularly the most vulnerable members of our community. We thank our partners, including Breaking Ground, for their collaboration on this important project."

"It is truly fitting to see this building continue its service to this community, first in public health, then as a home for CUNY students and now by providing hundreds of affordable supportive homes and deepening our city's commitment to affordable housing in Harlem," said **New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Adolfo Carrion, Jr.** "This success story is another example of the effective collaboration of the City and State, across multiple agencies, to bring dynamic programming, advance green construction design, and inclusive housing solutions to create investments that tackle the drivers of our housing crisis. HPD is proud to be part of the team and excited for the individuals and families that will call this place home"

"Supportive housing provides critical services that enable people living with mental illness to live and thrive in their communities," said **New York State Office of Mental Health Commissioner Dr. Ann Sullivan**. "The project to redevelop 1760 Third Avenue will fill an important need in the East Harlem area and will provide much needed housing stability for individuals experiencing homelessness, including 261 units for those living with mental illness. This project demonstrates Governor Hochul's continued commitment to increasing specialized housing for New Yorkers living with mental illness."

"We are grateful to Governor Hochul for making landmark investments to expand supportive housing across New York State, recognizing that stable housing is the foundation for stable health, a stable life, and strong communities," said **New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Barbara C. Guinn**. "The 1760 Third Avenue project will provide residents who have experienced homelessness with safe, affordable, energy-efficient apartments they can call home and onsite access to support services that will help them thrive in their community. Thank you to all our project partners and special thanks to Breaking Ground for their longtime leadership in providing supportive and transitional housing."

"We are excited to celebrate the start of construction at 1760 Third Avenue," said **New York City Council Member Diana Ayala**. "Our office was pleased to have invested \$2 million in capital discretionary funding in this project and we look forward to welcoming residents home once construction is complete. Thank you to all our partners."

"We thank Breaking Ground and the many community partners and neighbors who participated in bringing a long-term supportive and affordable housing option to East Harlem, strengthening the community and making lives better," said **Jason Rosenberg, head of Public Affairs at Wells Fargo**. "We were pleased to provide Breaking Ground with \$24.9 million in construction financing which will help enable them to transform the property into permanent housing, plus a \$500,000 grant from the

Wells Fargo Foundation to provide amenities that will help residents feel at home for decades to come."

"LIIF was honored to work with NYS Homes and Community Renewal, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance to secure a \$29.5 million acquisition and predevelopment loan in partnership with the New York City Acquisition Fund," said **Low Income Investment Fund Director Northeast Region Molly Anderson**. "This collaboration made a complex transaction a reality – and solidifies our relationship with a mission-aligned recipient, Breaking Ground, as we continue to strengthen historically underserved New York City communities such as East Harlem."

"Today, we celebrate a major milestone in our collective effort to address the affordable housing crisis and provide supportive services to those who need it most," said **Assemblymember Edward Gibbs**. "The groundbreaking of 1760 3rd Avenue marks a significant step forward in our mission to create a more just and equitable society. As we continue to address the affordable housing crisis, projects like this remind us that together, we can create a more just and equitable society for all. I'm honored to play a part in supporting this project, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact it will have on our community."

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About Breaking Ground

Breaking Ground is New York's largest supportive housing provider, and 2025 marks the agency's 35th year of building and restoring lives. Breaking Ground operates over 5,000 units of transitional and permanent housing in New York City, providing safe, stable, beautiful housing for those who need it most. Breaking Ground also runs, under contract with DHS, street homeless outreach services in all of Brooklyn, Queens, and a portion of Manhattan. Each year, Breaking Ground's continuum of outreach and housing touch the lives of more than 15,000 vulnerable New Yorkers.