## **Housing Quality Zoning**

New York City, New York



Street level facades should be alive and active (bottom), not dead (top).



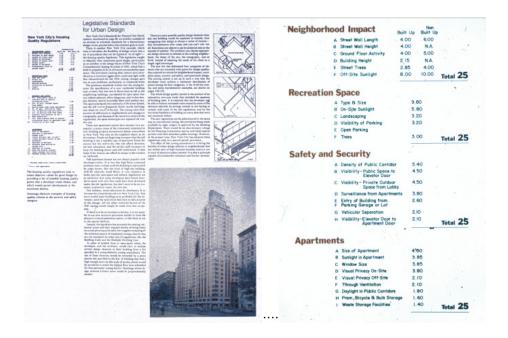
## Client:

Urban Design Council Mayor's Office City of New York

Director:

Michael Kwartler

Completed: 1976 (Adopted)



Housing Quality Zoning (HQZ) was directed by Michael Kwartler for the NYC Urban Design Council in 1975 and sets out an alternative to the conventional zoning legislated in the 1961 Zoning Resolution. Since 1961, the design of residential developments had been heavily influenced by New York's Zoning Resolution, which prescribed the tower-in-the-park form of development. However, as a result of the work of the Urban Design Council, it was revealed that the one-size-fits-all prescribed in the requirements of the 1961 Zoning Resolution actually detracted from the human scale and character of the City's traditional neighborhoods.

Briefly, Housing Quality Zoning is a set of 26 guidelines or program elements divided into four categories. The categories are Neighborhood Impact, Security and Safety, Recreation Space and Building Interior which contain program elements. Each program element contains a goal and a set of objective and measurable performance standards which met to determine the degree of compliance with the goal. Partial compliance, measured as a percentage, receives a point score somewhat less than the maximum. The system is based on permitting maximum flexibility and insuring a high level of minimum quality requiring only a passing score of 85 points not 100 points. This framework is a system of which quickly and objectively establishes the degree of compliance a building has with clearly stated planning and design objectives. Recognizing that design is a series of trade-offs, HQZ permits the architect or developer to choose which components of quality to emphasize over others as dictated by unique conditions such as marketing, neighborhood or site conditions.

Housing Quality Zoning was adopted in 1976 by the New York City Planning Commission and was the city's first performance-based regulations. It is featured in <u>An Introduction to Urban Design</u> (Barnett), received a Progressive Architecture Design Award in 1974, and has become the model for contextual zoning in NYC ("Quality Housing").