

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 120173 ZMX
Soundview Partners Apartments
July 20, 2012

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF AN application submitted by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 6c and 7a, by changing from an R5 District to an R6 District property bounded by Randall Avenue (southerly portion) and its easterly centerline prolongation, Rosedale Avenue, Lacombe Avenue, Bronx River Avenue, and a line passing through a point at an angle 70 degrees southerly to the southerly street line of Randall Avenue (southerly portion) distant 180 feet easterly (as measured along the street line) from the point of intersection of the southerly street line of the southerly portion of Randall Avenue and the easterly street line of Bronx River Avenue, borough of the Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated April 23, 2012.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will facilitate an amendment of the Zoning Map Numbers 6c and 7a, changing from an R5 District to an R6 District. The property is located on Block 3515, Lot 1. It is bounded by Randall Avenue on the north, Rosedale Avenue on the east, Lacombe Avenue and Bronx River Avenue to the south. Soundview Park is located on the west. The entire site consists of 519,774 square feet, or 11.93 acres, is mostly vacant and undeveloped; the only exception being an under-utilized parking lot accessible via Bronx River Avenue. This property is located in Bronx Community District 9 and owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the applicant.

Pursuant to this proposed zoning change the applicant will subdivide the property located on Block 3515, Lot 1 and sell this site to a developer. Subsequently, the developer proposes to construct 238 units of new housing, consisting of a residential development featuring three components. This development will front on a mapped, but yet-to-be-built (paper street) portion of Bronx River Avenue. This addition will approximate 1,360 linear feet and will include new sewers, fire hydrants, street lights, street trees and sidewalks. An additional twenty two on-street public parking spaces will result from this extension of Bronx River Avenue which will terminate as a cul-de-sac.

The primary objective sought by the developer pursuant to changing the existing R5 zone to an R6 zone is to allow for an increase in building height from a maximum of forty feet allowed under an R5 designation, to approximately 75 feet permitted in an R6 zone. This additional height allowance will permit a taller building with a less intrusive footprint. This in turn will allow for an increase amount of open space acreage, preserve the visual corridors for the residents of the public housing complexes immediately to the east and require less site preparation and tree removal.

The first component of this project is referred to as “the senior building.” It will offer 85 units of housing specifically designed to accommodate senior citizens over the age of fifty five. One additional residence will be reserved for the superintendent. The proposed building will offer:

- 85-1 bedroom units each consisting of 600 square feet
- 1-3 bedroom superintendent unit consisting of 1,340 square feet

The “senior building” will offer a community room exclusively for residence of this facility. This room will offer 400 square feet of space. A larger, more versatile room for larger gatherings will be constructed. This space, consisting of 1,100 square feet will be available to both residents of “the family building” and “senior building.” The “senior building” will offer surface parking for nineteen vehicles and eight bicycle spaces. A lounge areas on each floor will include 150 square feet of space.

The second component of this project includes 120 units, of which one unit will be provided to the superintendent. Referred to by the developer as “the family building” this structure will offer:

- 24-1 bedroom units each consisting of 600 square feet
- 78-2 bedroom units each consisting of 785 square feet
- 19-3 bedroom units each consisting of 1,065 square feet

A lounge area and mail box room consisting of 750 square feet plus laundry room are planned on-site amenities. An exterior terrace area for passive recreation consisting of 1,650 square feet is also envisioned. The “family building” includes forty two parking spaces on street level, plus sixty bicycle spaces.

The third component termed by the developer as “the town houses” will include sixteen buildings. Each structure will consist of three stories and include two residential units, yielding a total of thirty two residences.

- Unit A is a duplex, offering a total of 2,000 square feet (1,000 square feet on each level) and includes 3 bedrooms.
- Unit B offers 1,000 square feet and includes 2 bedrooms

Development of the surrounding community is dominated by the New York City Housing Authority complex known as Soundview Houses. This development includes thirteen, seven story buildings offering a total of 1,258 residential units. Soundview houses are located on Randall Avenue, north of the project site. Additional residential development includes mid-rise and high rise accommodations. Soundview Park, consisting of 205 acres of property, is located adjacent to the development site’s southern and western property line. Soundview Park offers a comprehensive array of recreational venues including, playgrounds for youngsters, running tracks, handball and basketball courts, baseball and recently inaugurated multipurpose fields. Also available at Soundview Park are launches for recreational water craft onto the Bronx River. There is no subway access within a four block radius of the proposed development site. Bus

transportation via the BX 27 is available at Rosedale and Randall Avenues. Retail access is available on Seward Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQR and received an Unlisted Designation. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on April 23, 2012.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board 9 held a public hearing on this matter on June 21, 2012. A vote recommending approval of this application was 20 in favor, zero opposed, five abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this application on July 3, 2012. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No members of the public offered comment on this matter and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

I am pleased to endorse the proposed amendment of the Zoning Map this application is considering. Based on the existing contextual profile of the surrounding community, coupled with the specific plans the developer is proposing for this location, I agree that development pursuant to an R6 zone will have minimal visual impact on the surrounding community, while allowing for less intrusive construction on undeveloped property.

At my public hearing the developer of Soundview Partners Apartments presented a comprehensive three phase plan of development. The first two phases include affordable rental units; one being for families the second for senior citizens. The third phase will include owner occupied town houses. It is the eventual inclusion of this third phase that makes this project all the more critical and reflective of my mixed-income community development policy.

I recommend approval of this application.