

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 180390 HAX, C 180391 PQX
599 COURTLANDT**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

C 180390 HAX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

1. Pursuant to Article 16 of the General Municipal Law of New York State for:
 - a) The designation of property located at 599 Courtlandt Avenue (Block 2410, Lot 43) as an Urban Development Action Area;
 - b) An Urban Development Action Area Project for such area; and
2. Pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter for the disposition of such property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

To facilitate a four-story building with approximately eight affordable units, and commercial space in Borough of The Bronx, Community District #1.

C 180391 PQX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the acquisition of property located at 599 Courtlandt Avenue (Block 2410, Lot 43) to facilitate an affordable housing development.

BACKGROUND

Approving these applications will facilitate construction of a low-rise, four-story residential building which will offer eight units of affordable housing and commercial space. The site is currently vacant and consists of 2,900 square feet. Offering 29 feet of frontage on the west side of Courtlandt Avenue, it is between East 150th Street on the south and East 151st Street on the north. It is zoned R6/C2-4 and is located in Bronx Community District #1.

The proposed building will total 8,631 square feet. This includes a total of 7,878 square feet for residential units and interior common areas, plus 753 square feet of retail space. Residential units include:

Type of Unit	Number of Units	Average Gross Square Footage
Studios	5	450 gross square feet
1-Bedroom	2	631 gross square feet
2-Bedrooms	0	0
3-Bedrooms	1	1,047 gross square feet, plus 280 square feet for exterior terrace

There is no superintendent's unit provided as this building will not be maintained by a fulltime super.

Affordable rents will range from 60% of Area Median Income (AMI), to 100% of AMI. This includes:

Type of Unit	60% of AMI	80% of AMI	100% of AMI
Studios	0	2	3
1-Bedroom	1	1	0
2-Bedrooms	0	0	0
3-Bedrooms	0	0	1

No elevator service is to be provided, however an ADA compliant residential unit will be located on the building's first floor. Located to the rear of the building will be an exterior garden composed of 800 square feet. Chain link fencing will be used to define this garden area. A refuse room will be provided accessible from Courtlandt Avenue. No access from within the building will be available to this room

Residential development within the surrounding community is typified by low-rise buildings. A mid-rise building offering medical care which includes a methadone clinic is located on the same block as is the proposed residential building this application is considering. This medical facility also owns a vacant lot which borders the southern boundary of the proposed 599 Courtlandt Avenue. The Bronx Documentary Center is located at the intersection of Courtlandt Avenue at East 151st Street. Retail development is found on Melrose Avenue and on East 149th Street, both of which approximate one block from the proposed development. Subway access via the #2 and #5 trains is located on East 149th Street, while bus transit operates on Melrose Avenue and East 149th Street.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

These applications have been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified these applications as complete on June 11, 2018.

BRONX COMMUNITY DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community District #1 held a public hearing on these applications on June 27, 2018. A vote recommending approval of this application was 26 in favor, zero opposed and two abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on August 2, 2018. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of these applications. No other members of the public were in attendance and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

The development these applications will facilitate is noteworthy if only because of its modest size. To be sure, constructing a low-rise, eight-unit residential building which compliments the "built profile" of the surrounding community is entirely appropriate. So too, inclusion of a retail shop is a throwback to a time when a merchant conducted business downstairs and lived upstairs.

Nonetheless, there are two concerns which must be resolved if this project is to gain my unqualified support:

- 1) Access to the "trash-room" *must* be made from within the building. The current design which would require residents to exit the building onto the street, open a separate door from the street in order to access this facility is entirely not acceptable. In addition to the inconvenience, the current plan poses a security risk to residents as they enter or leave the room. Making certain the door to this room properly closes and is secure, especially during the winter when snow and ice may accumulate, only adds to the concerns residents need not be burdened with. So too, by providing a doorway into the trash room from the street, this will only encourage rodent infestation, especially if the door is not entirely sealed when closed.
- 2) The inclusion of chain link fencing has never been acceptable by my administration. As noted at my public hearing, I vigorously oppose installation of such fencing.

I recommend approval with the aforementioned conditions.