

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 210154.HAX & C 210155 HUX
Melrose Open Door CB 1**

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

C 210154 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 672 St. Ann's Avenue and 675 Eagle Avenue (Block 2617, Lots 20 and 70) 667 Cauldwell Avenue (Block 2624, Lot 73) and 840-842 Tinton Avenue (Block 2667, Lots 1 and 2) as an Urban Development Action Area; and
 - b) 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 property to a developer to be selected by HPD;

To facilitate the development of four buildings containing approximately 28 affordable housing units, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #1.

C 210155 HUX

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), pursuant to Section 505 of Article 15 of the General Municipal (Urban Renewal) Law of New York State and Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for the first amendment to the Mott Haven North Urban Renewal Plan, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 1.

BACKGROUND

Approval of these applications will facilitate two related matters:

- Construction of approximately four, 4-story residences in Bronx Community District #1 pursuant to zoning. These four buildings will yield approximately 28 affordable cooperative units.
- Amending the Mott Haven North Urban Renewal Plan exempting Urban Renewal Sites 2 and 6 from Floor Area Ratio (FAR), Open Space Ratio, and parking regulations.

All proposed development is “as of right” meaning that no zoning amendments are required. However, pursuant to ULURP Application C 210155 HUX, an amendment of the Mott Haven North Urban Renewal Plan is proposed by the applicant, seeking to amend Section C.2.b. (1). This action is necessary to facilitate construction of two buildings offering a combined total of 12-residential units at:

- Development Site 1: 672 St. Ann’s Avenue (Block 2617, Lot 20) which is located in part of Site 2 of the Mott Haven Urban Renewal Plan
- Development Site 2: 675 Eagle Avenue (Block 2617, Lot 70) which is located in part of Site 6 of the Mott Haven Urban Renewal Plan

This amendment would exempt the proposed development from on-site parking requirements, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Open Space Ratio Requirements.

Scope of Development

Four buildings will be constructed yielding a total of 28 owner-occupied residential units. All units will be affordable cooperatives meaning that perspective residents will purchase shares of stock in a cooperation that will own all the residences proposed herein. The property on which the proposed buildings will stand will be owned by the Interborough Community Land Trust. The buildings will be managed by the Mutual Housing Association of New York (MHANY).

All future sales of cooperative shares will remain affordable at the initial Area Median Income (AMI) for thirty years. This stipulation offers an “investment incentive” to remain in the community for the full duration of this time. Perspective investors will have the option of providing no more than 5% down against the total sum being financed. A higher down payment yields lower monthly mortgage expenses.

Residences will feature:

- Energy efficient heating systems
- Energy efficient windows
- Energy efficient appliances
- In unit washer and dryer hookups
- All ground floor units will be ADA compliant
- Some buildings will feature day-lit common areas
- Roof access for passive recreation
- Heat, water and cooking gas will be paid for by the corporation
- Electric service will be paid for by the resident
- Basement storage
- Bicycle storage
- Common areas will be maintained by the cooperative

The applicant proposes two Project Areas in which four Development Sites are identified. These are:

- **Project Site 1:**
 - Development Site 1: 672 St Ann's Avenue (Block 2617, Lot 20) Zoned R6
 - Development Site 2: 675 Eagle Avenue (Block 2617 Lot 70) Zoned R6
 - Development Site 3: 667 Cauldwell Avenue (Block 2624, Lot 73) Zoned R6

- **Project Site 2:**
 - Development Site 4: 840 Tinton Avenue (Block 2667, Lot 1) Zoned R6
 - Development Site 4: 842 Tinton Avenue (Block 2667, Lot 2) Zoned R6

Site Development Overview

Project Site 1

Development Site 1: 672 St Ann's Avenue (Block 2617, Lot 20): Zone R6. FAR 3.00. Building Lot Area: 2,605 square feet. Frontage 27.5 feet, Depth 94.5 feet. Site is vacant
Scope of Development:

- 4-story building plus mezzanine composed of 7,207 zoning square feet of residential development. This building will offer 8-residential units, including studios, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom units.

- The proposed development of this site requires amending the Mott Haven North Urban Renewal Plan. The FAR and Open Space mandates are not consistent with current zoning requirements and parking mandates too restrictive for the modest size of development proposed for this site .

This site is located midblock, on the east side of St Ann's Avenue, between Rae Street on the south, East 156th Street on the north, Brook Avenue on the west and Eagle Avenue to the east. Residential development is typified by mid-rise, 5-story buildings all of which were constructed prior to the 1930's. Commercial development is found on Westchester Avenue. Mass transit services via the Bx4 on Westchester Avenue and the Bx15 and Bx21 operating on Third Avenue. Subway access is offered by the #2 and #5 trains operates on Westchester Avenue and is accessible from either Jackson Avenue or Prospect Avenue stations.

Development Site 2: 675 Eagle Avenue (Block 2617, Lot 70): Zone R6. FAR 2.20.

Building Lot Area 1,930 square feet. Frontage 19.4 feet, Depth 99.4 feet. This site is secured by decorative fencing and is used for off-street parking.

Scope of Development:

- 4-story building composed of 4,201 zoning square feet of residential floor area. Development includes 4-two bedroom units.
- The proposed development of this site requires amending the Mott Haven North Urban Renewal Plan. The FAR and Open Space mandates are not consistent with current zoning requirements and parking mandates too restrictive for the modest size of development proposed for this site .

This site is located midblock, on the west side of Eagle Avenue, between East 156th Street to the north, Westchester Avenue to the south and St Ann's Avenue to the east. Residential development is typified by low-rise, one and two family homes constructed post 1980, as well as midrise three and four story wood frame dwellings predating 1920. Commercial development is found on Westchester Avenue. Mass transit access is via the Bx4 on Westchester Avenue. The Bx15 and Bx21 operate on Third Avenue. Subway service via the #2 and #5 trains operates on Westchester Avenue and is accessible at the Jackson Avenue and Prospect Avenue stations.

Development Site 3: 667 Cauldwell Avenue (Block 2624, Lot 73): Zone R6. FAR 2.20.

Building Lot Area 2,875 square feet. Frontage 25 feet. Depth 115 feet. This site is vacant.

Scope of Development:

- 4-story building composed of 6,325 zoning square feet of residential floor area. Development includes eight units, composed of studios and 1- bedroom flats.

This site is located midblock on the west side of Cauldwell Avenue, between East 156th Street to the north, Westchester Avenue to the south, Eagle Avenue to the west. A super-block with a high rise development operated by the New York City Housing Administration (NYCHA) is located on the east side of Cauldwell Avenue, directly opposite the proposed development of this site. Additional residential development on the east side of Cauldwell Avenue is typified by low rise, one and two family homes constructed post 1980. Low rise four and five story residential buildings constructed prior to 1920 are located on the west side of Cauldwell Avenue. Commercial development is found on Westchester Avenue. Mass transit access is via the Bx4 on Westchester Avenue. Subway service via the #2 and #5 trains operates on Westchester Avenue and is accessible at the Jackson Avenue station.

Project Site 2

Development Site 4: 840 & 842 Tinton Avenue (Block 2667, Lots 1 and 2 respectively)

Zone R6. FAR 2.20. Building Lot Area for Lot 1: 1,886 square feet. Building Lot Area for Lot 2: 1,863 square feet. Taken as one development site, this yields 3,749 square feet.

Frontage 41 feet. Depth 92 feet. This site is vacant.

Scope of Development:

- 4-story building with mezzanine comprised of 8,240 zoning square feet of residential floor area. Development includes 8-units, featuring one, two, and three bedroom flats.

This site is located on the northeast corner of Tinton Avenue at East 160th Street. It is bounded by Tinton Avenue on the west, Union Avenue to the east, East 161st Street to the north and East 160th Street on the south. Residential development is typified by low rise one and two family wood frame homes constructed prior to 1920 and more recently constructed two family homes constructed during the 1990s. Additional development also includes mid-rise, 5-story residential buildings constructed during the 1920's and the Woodstock branch of the New York Public Library. Commercial development is found on Westchester Avenue, Prospect Avenue and on East 161st Street. Mass transit access is available via the Bx4 on Westchester Avenue, the Bx6 and SBS#6 operating on East 163rd Street and the Bx17 on Prospect Avenue. Subway service via the #2 and #5 trains is found on Westchester Avenue at Intervale Avenue.

Apartment Size Breakdown, Price Range, AMI, Down Payment Minimum

Studio: 3

Square Feet: 442-554

Price Range: \$157,000-\$197,000

Annual Income Range: \$48,894-\$56,974

Area Median Income (AMI): 67%-84%

5% down payment minimum: \$7,850-\$9,850

1-Bedroom Units: 20

Square Feet: 566-738

Price Range: \$201,000-\$262,000

Annual Income Range: \$58,399-\$75,335

AMI: 68%-88%

5% down payment minimum: \$10,050-\$13,100

2-Bedroom Units: 4

Square Feet: 673-911

Price Range: \$239,000-\$323,000

Annual Income Range: \$69,708-93,066

AMI: 68%-91%

5% down payment minimum: \$11,950-\$16,150

3-Bedroom Units: 1

Square Feet: 923-1,134

Price Range: \$331,000-\$402,000

Annual Income Range: \$96,037-\$115,995

AMI: 81%-91%

5% down payment minimum: \$16,550-\$20,100

Perspective buyers will participate in the Housing Connect Lottery.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

These applications were reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified these applications as complete on December 14, 2020.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was held by Bronx Community Board #1 on February 25, 2021. A vote recommending approval of these applications was 15, in favor, six opposed and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a virtual public hearing on March 18, 2021. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of these applications. No other participants were present and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

It is with much pride that I have witnessed a virtual transformation in Bronx Community District #1. What was the original "South Bronx" now boasts residential development perhaps never seen before south of 138th Street. Likewise, as it was along Bruckner Boulevard that the city's first "Mixed Use" zoning district was established, what were once empty or nearly empty outdated industrial buildings, today these same structures offer both a place to live and a place for innovative commercial endeavors to take hold.

My administration is committed to expanding home ownership in The Bronx. The benefits of making these opportunities real for Bronx residents can only be achieved if they are first and foremost afforded to those who now reside here. This is an absolute imperative of mine and key to my support of this and all future home ownership proposals. I therefore implore the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to ensure that these new affordable cooperative units are marketed to local Bronx residents. By so doing, not only will these homes provide folks with the chance to make a commitment to their community, but their investment also means that as Bronx Community District #1 continues to grow, so too will that investment. This is indeed a vital part of realizing the "American dream."

As for those who now live where these homes will be constructed, I am mindful of a serious concern raised by a resident of a building adjacent to where one of these new homes will be built. In a very comprehensive letter, a Bronx resident of thirty four years noted this new building would essentially block out ventilation and light he now enjoys. I commend the applicant and developers for their response. By altering the initial design of the proposed building, a "well" will be provided. This will allow for light and air, and as I understand it this also satisfies the resident's complaint. So too, given that all but one of the sites selected is too modest in size to support a mid or high rise residential building, the development of these vacant lots removes any chance of blight on the adjacent neighborhood.

As a point of policy, I regret that these new buildings will not offer a higher percentage of two and three-bedroom flats. In this specific instance however, I acknowledge that site constraints pose design challenges for larger units. I also realize that the full build out of the Open Door home ownership program includes properties beyond Bronx Community District #1. As such, there are overall 31 two and three-bedroom units, while there are 39 studios and 1-bedrooms. I will remain steadfast that any future developments must favor an equitable array of 2, 3 and where feasible, 4-bedroom units.

I am pleased that Bronx Community Board #1 voted to approve these applications and I am also very pleased to recommend its approval.