

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 190118 ZMX
909 Castle Hill Avenue Rezoning

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by 510 Realty Inc., pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 7a:

1. Changing from an R3-2 District to an R6B property bounded by Quimby Avenue, Castle Hill Avenue, Story Avenue, a line 180 feet westerly of Castle Hill Avenue, a line midway between Quimby Avenue and Story Avenue, and a line 80 feet westerly of Castle Hill Avenue; and
2. Establishing within the proposed R6B District a C1-3 District bounded by Quimby Avenue, Castle Hill Avenue, Story Avenue, and a line 80 feet westerly of Castle Hill Avenue;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District 9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated December 14, 2020, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-596.

BACKGROUND

Approval of this application will establish a R6B/C1-3 District on Block 3687, Lots 37, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43. Referred to as the "Project Area" it occupies the entire frontage along the west side of Castle Hill Avenue, between Quimby Avenue on the north and Story Avenue on the south.

The Project Area is currently zoned R3-2, with a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.5.

The Project Area includes:

- Lot 37: Approx. 2,993 square feet-southwest corner: Castle Hill Ave.-Quimby Ave.
- Lot 39: Approx. 1,300 square feet-mid block
- Lot 40: Approx. 1,300 square feet-mid block
- Lot 41: Approx. 1,300 square feet-mid block
- Lot 42: Approx. 1,307 square feet-mid bloc
- Total: 8,200 square feet**
- Lot 43: Approx. 18,643 square feet-northwest corner: Castle Hill Ave.-Story Ave.

With the exception of Lot 43, the remaining lots extend 80 feet west (deep) from Castle Hill Avenue. As such:

- Lot 37 offers approximately 37 feet of frontage on Castle Hill Avenue
- Lot 39 offers approximately 17 feet of frontage on Castle Hill Avenue
- Lot 40 offers approximately 17 feet of frontage on Castle Hill Avenue

- Lot 42 offers approximately 17 feet (+) frontage on Castle Hill Avenue

Lot 43 is the only lot that extends 180 feet west (deep) from Castle Hill Avenue consisting of 18,643 square feet. As such it offers approximately 103 feet of frontage on Castle Hill Avenue.

Existing development on Lot 37: 919-921 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story mixed use building with 4-residential units and accessible from the street are two commercial storefronts. This building was constructed in 1931. FAR: 2.85

Existing development on Lot 39: 917 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story mixed use building with 2-residential units and accessible from the street is one commercial storefront. This building was constructed in 1920. FAR: 2.86

Existing development on Lot 40: 915 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story brick mixed use building with 2-residential units and accessible from the street is one commercial storefront. This building was constructed in 1920. FAR: 2.86

Existing development on Lot 41: 913 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story mixed brick use building with 2 residential units and accessible from the street is one commercial storefront. This building was constructed in 1920. FAR: 2.86

Existing development on Lot 42: 911 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story brick, mixed use building with 2 residential units and accessible from the street is one commercial storefront. This building was constructed in 1920. FAR: 2.84.

Existing development on Lot 43: 909 Castle Hill Avenue: 3-story wood frame building with 3-residential units. This building was constructed in 1899. FAR: 0.17

The five buildings within the Project Area exceed the permitted maximum FAR of 0.5 pursuant to R3-2 District. The Project Area does not include any commercial overlays and therefore all existing retail uses are non-complying with current zoning. Given that these five buildings were constructed between 1920 and 1931, they therefore predate the adoption of current zoning ordinances.

The R6B zoning district allows for a maximum FAR of 2.0 (Quality Housing buildings) 2.2 (with inclusionary housing). When mapped over a R6B district, C1-3 overlay districts permit a commercial use maximum FAR of 1.0. As proposed, the R6B district will include all of the Lots within the Project Area. As also proposed, the C1-3 overlay will extend a maximum of 80 feet west of Castle Hill Avenue on all Lots, including Lot 43, the Development Site.

Block 3687, Lot 43 is the "Development Site." As heretofore noted, it is situated on the northwest corner of Castle Hill Avenue at Story Avenue. A wood frame residential building constructed in 1899 consists of 3,250 square feet. It occupies the northeast corner of this lot. The remaining area of this site is void of any improvements. The dwelling includes 3-residential units.

Pending approval of this application, the applicant proposes to construct a 5-story mixed use residential building on Lot 43, rising approximately 50 feet. It will set back 15 feet from Story Avenue and 10 feet from Castle Hill Avenue above the third story.

The proposed building will offer:

- Residential, commercial and a community facility.
- Total floor area will approximately 40,944 square feet (2.2 FAR)
- Residential floor area on stories 2-5 composed of 34,754 square feet
- Ground floor commercial area composed of 3,744 square feet
- Ground floor community use facility area composed of 2,446 square feet
- Residential underground parking for 22 vehicles
- Bicycle parking for 44 bikes

As proposed, the 35 residential units will consist of:

- Studio Units: 2
- 1 Bedroom Units: 18
- 2 Bedroom Units: 11
- 3 Bedroom Units: 4

Pursuant to Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH Option 1) the following will be set aside:

- Studio Units: 1
- 1-Bedroom Units: 4
- 2-Bedroom Units: 3
- 3-Bedroom Units: 1

Anticipated Rent Charges:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------|--------------------------|
| • Studio: | \$ 950 | Affordable Rent: \$ 909 |
| • 1-Bedroom: | \$1,250 | Affordable Rent: \$1,143 |
| • 2-Bedroom: | \$1,750 | Affordable Rent: \$1,366 |
| • 3-Bedroom: | \$2,200 | Affordable Rent: \$1,570 |

The residential lobby will be accessible via Story Avenue. So too, access to one commercial venue and the community facility space and the off-street parking facility will be located on Story Avenue. Two additional commercial spaces will be accessible via Castle Hill Avenue. A curb-cut now located on Castle Hill Avenue will be removed and a 13-foot curb cut on Story Avenue will be constructed.

Space for passive recreation will be offered to residents on the building's main roof. Access is to be provided by elevator and stairs. As mandated, solar energy installation will also be installed on the building's roof.

Development of the surrounding community is typified by low-rise, one and two family homes. Access to retail venues are located on Castle Hill Avenue. Bus service is provided via the Bx5, Bx22 and BxM8 Express, all of which operate on Castle Hill Avenue and/or Bruckner Boulevard. Both the Bx5 and Bx22 stop adjacent to the proposed site. The interchange of the Bruckner and Cross Bronx Expressways are located one block from the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQR and received a Type II Designation. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on December 14, 2020.

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was held on January 21, 2021. A vote recommending approval of this application with modifications was 24 in favor, zero opposed, zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on March 5, 2021. Those representing the applicant spoke in favor of this application. No other participants were present and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Approving this application will facilitate the first mid-rise residential building to be constructed within a neighborhood where low-rise residences typify what is in place. As such, the built profile of the proposed building is of paramount concern to me. So too, by virtue of the fact that 909 Castle Hill Avenue is to be the first of its kind in this area, it sets a standard that will define the surrounding community, if only because it will be unique and new.

At my public hearing the applicant's architect noted that setbacks will mitigate the mass and size of the proposed building. I am therefore satisfied that this critical issue is recognized by the applicant. I do, however, insist that when façade treatments are finalized, my office be given the opportunity to comment on this issue and where appropriate offer suggestions.

My administration is most anxious to advance residential development that is owned rather than rented. As such, my initial response to this application was one of caution and concern given that multi-unit development in a community where home ownership is prevalent can serve to

undermine the desirability of the nearby owner occupied homes. Having reviewed this application, I am confident that this concern has been addressed by the building's design and as such, will not harm nearby homes.

I am pleased to note that the applicant is fully supportive of the conditions presented by Bronx Community Board #9 and intends to adhere to these conditions.

I recommend approval of this application.