

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 210195 HAX-97 West 169th Street (Corporal Fischer)

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THEMATTER 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 97 West 169th Street (Block 2519, Lots 27 and 32) as an Urban Development Action Area; area
 - b) As 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 development of a nine-story building containing approximately 104 affordable housing units and community facility space, Borough of The Bronx, Community District #4.

BACKGROUND

The site this application is considering was mapped as part of Corporal Fischer Park. In 2017 the New York State Legislature authorized the City to discontinue the designation of Block 2519, Lot 27 as parkland and provide that this portion of Corporal Fischer Park be an eventual site for affordable housing. In March, 2018, the City of New York rezoned a 92-block corridor of property located on, and adjacent to Jerome Avenue. Pursuant to this rezoning, the Jerome Avenue Points of Agreement identified this site for development of affordable housing for senior citizens.

Approval of this application will facilitate construction of a nine-story residential building to be constructed on Block 2519, Lots 27 and 32. The full height of the proposed building will approximate 95 feet. The Development Site consists of 15,121 square feet of vacant property. It is bounded by West 169th Street on the south, West 170th Street on the north, Nelson Avenue on the west and Shakespeare Avenue on the east. The site offers 150 feet of frontage and is located mid-block, on the north side of West 169th Street. The proposed development will front onto West 169th Street. The development site is located on an R7-1 zone.

Inspired by many of the Art Deco buildings found in The Bronx, the façade of this proposed building will include a variety of colors highlighting window treatments. Sustainable features will include passive solar shading, energy efficient windows and lighting in addition to green walls planted with native vegetation.

The proposed development will be composed of 73,507 square feet. Residential space will occupy 71,042 square feet providing for approximately 104 units of affordable housing for seniors over the age of 62. A superintendent's unit is also included, yielding a total of 105 residential units. Twenty-two enhanced care studios will occupy the building's two top stories. A communal dining room, kitchen and lounge area will also be provided on each of the two enhanced care stories.

Additional highlights include:

- 45 Studio Units measuring approximately Net 390 square feet of which 22 units will be designated "enhanced care" studios specifically designated to offer aging-in-place accommodations.
- 59 1-Bedroom Units measuring approximately Net 520 square feet
- 32 units are to be set aside for the homeless
- Recreational Space measuring Net 2,842 square feet
- Community Facility Space measuring Net 2,465 square feet

On the main level residents will have access to

- Landscaped rear garden
- Indoor porch providing residents with a brightly illuminated space to wait for guests, meet other residents, or simply relax while having a full view of the street outside.
- Multi-purpose room
- Nurses office
- Laundry room facilities

Social services staff will have access to four offices and conference room. So too, building management will be provided with two offices.

Services to be provided to residents include:

- A full-service medical clinic which will be accessible to both those who reside in this facility and those who live in the surrounding community. This health care center will be managed by Damien Family Care, a federally qualified health care center (FQHC). The facility will approximate 2,400 square feet and will be accessible from West 169th Street.
- On site social service care will be offered, including

- On-site bilingual case management
 - Counseling
 - Crisis intervention
 - Nutritional care
 - Medication supervision
 - Transportation assistance
- 24/7 front desk coverage to welcome guests and enhance security

All residential units will receive Project Based Section 8 vouchers. Residents pay 30% of their income towards rent. This development will accommodate 0 to 50% of Area Median Income (AMI). The New York City Department of Social Services will coordinate the allocation of the 32 units set aside for the homeless. The units remaining will be assigned through the HDC Housing Connect lottery.

Development in the surrounding community is typified by low and mid-rise residential buildings. Retail activity and bus transportation via the Bx13 are found on Ogden Avenue, approximately three blocks east of the site. The Bx35 on Edward L. Grant Highway, is a block east of the site. The Bx11 operates on Plimpton Avenue, two blocks west of the site. The nearest subway service offered is the IRT 4 train. It operates on Jerome Avenue/River Avenue with stations at 167th and 170th Streets, both approximately 6 blocks east, and IND B/D trains at 167th and 170th Streets, approximately 2/3 mile east. The Yankees-East 153rd Street Metro-North station is located approximately one mile south. Vehicular access to both the Major Deegan and Cross Bronx Expressways are located less than ½ mile from the site. Access to the Harlem River Drive is less than one mile northwest.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. This application was certified as complete by the New York City Planning Commission on November 25, 2020.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #4 held a virtual public hearing on this application on January 26, 2021. A unanimous vote recommending approval was 35 in favor, zero against and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on February 16, 2021. Those representing the applicant spoke in favor of this application. No other members of the public participated and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Critical to our community is affordable residential accommodations for our senior citizens. Further, critical to these valued members of our community is access to a comprehensive array of health care services, including a full-service medical clinic, nutritional counseling, on-site social services and ample recreational space. I am therefore pleased to support this application which will facilitate construction of a full-service residential facility at 97 West 169th Street. It is to be managed by the West Side Federation for Sustainable Senior Housing (WSFSSH)

In 2018, this site was demapped as a public park for residential use. The property laid fallow for decades, with no resources available to develop this portion of Corporal Fischer Park. Now that a plan is underway for the remaining portion of Corporal Fischer Park, it is time to remove this blighted eyesore from the streets of our borough.

Given our experience with the COVID-19 virus, and how it has so severely impacted the Highbridge community, it is most appropriate that not only will our seniors have access to an on-site full-service health care clinic, but so too will all those who live nearby. Other amenities such as the "indoor porch" not only gives residents a place to watch the street, but affords that extra "eyes on the street" that many believe improves community safety.

This proposal will create permanent employment opportunities along with construction jobs at a time when both are so urgently needed. Beyond this however, it will also offer 32 formerly homeless individuals a comfortable and safe place to live. Finally, as younger residents of Highbridge raise families and establish ties to this community, 97 West 169th Street will provide an option that they may opt to choose.

I recommend approval of this application.