

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 220091 ZSX
660-668 East Fordham Road
Related Applications N 220092 ZCX, N 220093 LDX

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Shadi Development, LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Sections 74-533 of the Zoning Resolution to waive all required accessory off-street parking spaces for dwelling units in a development within a Transit Zone, that includes at least 20 percent of all dwelling units as income-restricted housing units, in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, on property located at 660-668 East Fordham Road (Block 03091, Lots 20, 22, 24, 26 & 27), in a C4-5D District, Borough of The Bronx, Community District 6.

Plans for this proposal are on file with the City Planning Commission and may be seen at 120 Broadway, 31st Floor, New York, N.Y. 10271-0001.

BACKGROUND

The development site this application pertains to is located on the north side of East Fordham Road. It is bounded by East 189th Street to the north, Cambreleng Avenue on the east, and Hughes Avenue on the west. This site includes a total of approximately 17,749 square feet of property located on Block 3091, Lots 20, 22, 24, 26, & 27. It offers approximately 151 feet of frontage on East Fordham Road and approximately 114 feet along Cambreleng Avenue. Existing development on this property consists of three, one story, low rise buildings, which were previously occupied by a variety of retail office tenants and one residential unit. These three buildings include a total of 11,400 square feet of space. The residential unit composed of 2,600 square feet. All these locations are now vacant. These sites are in a C4-5D District.

An off street paved parking lot accommodating 47 spaces is located within the development site. It is located on the northeast corner of East Fordham Road at Cambreleng Avenue. This parking lot exists pursuant to a Restrictive Declaration against Lots 20, 22, 24 and 26, requiring that off-street parking be provided for 625 East Fordham Road (Block 3273, Lot 225). This property is located on the south side of East Fordham Road. It accommodates medical offices and related ambulatory services.

Approval of this application will facilitate the demolition of the vacant buildings located on Block 3091, Lots, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 27, (the development site) and construction of an 11-story mixed use building, composed of approximately 99,390 zoning square feet, or 5.6 FAR. It will rise approximately 105 feet. The proposed development includes construction of 145 residential units. From this total number of units, 28 will be permanently affordable at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) pursuant to the Voluntary Inclusionary Housing Program (VIH). Entry to this residence will be via Cambreleng Avenue.

The specifics of the proposed development include:

VIH Units (All calculations are based on 80% of Area Median Income (AMI))

Studios:	3	Size: 449 Gross Square Feet (GSF)	Rent: \$1,314 per month
1 Bedrooms:	20	Size: 669 GSF	Rent: \$1,651 per month
2 Bedrooms:	5	Size: 994 GSF	Rent: \$1,974 per month
3 Bedrooms:	Zero		
Total:	28		

Market Rate

Studios:	14	Size: 528 Gross Square Feet (GSF)
1 Bedrooms:	81	Size: 565 GSF
2 Bedrooms:	22	Size: 854 GSF
3 Bedrooms:	Zero	
Total:	117	

(The applicant notes that the gross square foot size of the affordable 1 and 2 bedroom units are larger than those proposed for market rent leasing).

Grand Total: 145

Amenities to be provided include:

- An attended garage providing 47 spaces (pursuant to the Restrictive Declaration)
- A bike room providing space for 82 bicycles
- An accessible common area on the roof which will be “greened” for passive recreation
- A “cold” room for the storage of grocery deliveries
- A fitness room approximating 1,000 square feet
- A common area lounge on the 11th story approximating 1,000 square feet
- Approximately 90% of all units will offer hookups for a washer and dryer

Sustainable amenities include:

- A storm water detention tank to retain excess water
- High insulation values exceeding New York City Building Code requirements by 20%
- The installation of vegetation on the 2nd floor terrace areas and on the roof

The applicant is also proposing to include a FRESH use (Use Group 6) supermarket to be located on street level. This area will be approximate 14,482 square feet. The FRESH use would waive parking requirements. An additional 999 gross square feet will be located on the cellar level for accessory space. Entry to the supermarket will be located at the building’s west corner from either East Fordham Road or Cambreleng Avenue. Delivery and related utilitarian services for the supermarket will be accessible at the building’s eastern corner fronting on East Fordham Road. No loading dock area for deliveries to the supermarket is proposed.

Existing development in the surrounding community is defined by low-rise commercial buildings serving a wide range of venues, including a tattoo parlor, a bank, and a rental car facility and the office of the Department of Motor Vehicles. Opposite the site, on the south side of East Fordham Road are two, midrise office buildings serving professional tenants, most notably those associated with the medical profession. Of these two buildings, 625 East Fordham Road is associated with the applicant.

Within walking distance of the development site are Fordham University to the north and west and the Belmont community also known as “Little Italy of The Bronx,” to the south. Within approximately one-half mile to the east are the Bronx Zoo and New York Botanical Garden, while to the west is where Fordham Road is one of the city’s most active retail corridors. A vast majority of residential development is located on adjacent avenues and streets. It is typified by low and midrise buildings.

Railroad service via Metro North is found on Fordham Road, (Fordham Plaza) approximately ¼ mile to the west of the development site. This station is the third busiest station among all those served by Metro North. Fordham Plaza also serves as a major junction for numerous bus lines, including the Bx 9 which operates on Southern Boulevard, .Bx 12, Bx 12-Select Bus Service which operates on Fordham Road and Pelham Parkway, the Bx 15 serves Third Avenue, the Bx22 serves White Plains Road, and Bx41 serving Fordham Road and Tremont Avenue. Forhdam Plaza also is where Bee line buses serving Westchester County can be accessed. Subway access via the “D” train is found on the Grand Concourse approximately ½ mile to the west or via the #2 and #5 trains approximately ½ mile to the east on Pelham Parkway at White Plains Road.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on September 20, 2021.

BRONX COMMUNITY DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING

A virtual public hearing was held by Bronx Community Board #6 on November 10, 2021. A vote recommending this application be denied was 28 in favor of denying this application, 2 in favor of approving this application, and zero abstaining.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S PUBLIC HEARING

The Borough President convened a virtual public hearing on this application. The hearing took place on December 2, 2021. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No other attendees sought to comment and the hearing was closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

As Borough President I have consistently insisted that all residential development proposals that require my endorsement include a minimum unit distribution of 2 and 3 bedroom units be 40% of the total. I am therefore very displeased by the fact this development entirely ignores the overwhelming demand families have for 3-bedroom flats, while offering a bare minimum of 2-bedroom units (18.6%). Studios cannot comfortably accommodate a family with any children, while one bedroom units are likely to be “outgrown” within a relatively short time frame. As such, this development is not likely to attract those who would want to remain members of this community, but rather it will be a “stop-over” for folks bound for another community at some point in the future. When asked if these smaller units would be marketed to neighboring Fordham University for potential graduate student housing, the answer was no. Who, then, will this building be marketed to?

I find this to be a shame, as the renderings provided at my public hearing shows a building that is unique in its design as it provides numerous units with terraces and rooftop amenities that offer space for passive recreation, and a storm water retention system included is an environmental asset that I believe should be part of all proposed buildings. The building will also contain a FRESH supermarket.

The applicant team had full opportunity to consider changes to the unit mix. My office met with them before the ULURP hearing and addressed these concerns, both then and during the hearing. The applicant was adamant they could and would not make any changes. It is extremely disappointing and unfortunate, as my office had worked favorably with the applicant in the past. Rationale of “the plan is too far along” or “we would lose money”, are not adequate responses to serve this community. The community board had issue with the loss of parking. While I feel sufficient parking will be provided, it appears that the applicant has a plethora of issues that need to be addressed, but is falling on deaf ears. It would be one thing if the applicant was working in good faith at addressing these issues, but to dig one’s heels into the ground does not get anyone anywhere. Unless the applicant is will to provide evidence that accommodations can and will be made, I cannot support this project..

I do not recommend approval of this application.