

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 150312 ZMX
Concourse Village West Rezoning
August 15, 2016

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Upper Manhattan Development Corp. pursuant to Section 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for the amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 6a:

1. Changing from a C8-3 District to an R7D District property bounded by a line 100 feet northwesterly of Concourse Village West, East 156th Street, Concourse Village West, East 153rd Street, the centerline of the easterly portion of Grand Concourse, and a line 525 feet southwesterly of East 156th Street;
2. Changing from a C8-3 District to an R8 District property bounded by the centerline of the easterly portion of Grand Concourse, a line 450 feet southwesterly of East 156th Street, a line 100 feet northwesterly of Concourse Village West, and a line 525 feet southwesterly of East 156th Street; and
3. Establishing within the proposed R7D District a C1-4 District bounded by a line 100 feet northwesterly of Concourse Village West, East 156th Street;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #4, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated May 23, 2016.

BACKGROUND

Approving this application will facilitate the rezoning of property located on Block 2458, Lots 13, 35, and 49. These lots are bounded by East 156th Street on the north, East 153rd Street on the South, the Grand Concourse on the West, and Concourse Village West, on the East. Currently these lots are zoned C8-3 and are all utilized as open-air, privately owned off street parking lots which service the surrounding community.

There are two actions required to facilitate the full completion of this project:

1. A Zoning Map amendment to Map 6a, changing a C8-3 zoning to an R7D, R7D/C1-4 and an R8 District.
2. A zoning resolution text amendment to Appendix F to designate the proposed zoning districts as Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Designated Areas (MIH).

The Upper Manhattan Development Corporation (the applicant) proposes to construct three residential buildings, which therefore requires an amendment of the Zoning Map:

- Site 1: 702 Grand Concourse: (Block 2458, Lot 13): C8-3, to R8
- Site 2: 180 East 156th Street: (Block 2458, Lot 35): C8-3, to R7D/C1-4
- Site 3: 741 Concourse Village West: (Block 2458, Lot 49): C8-3, to R7D

Taken as one comprehensive development, the three buildings will offer:

- Studio units: 37
- 1-Bedroom: 85
- 2-Bedrooms: 85
- 3-Bedrooms: 37

The total of all units to be constructed will offer:

- 50% at or below 60% of Area Median Household Income (AMI)
- 5% at or below 80% of AMI
- 15% at or below 90% of AMI
- 30% at or below 100% of AMI

702 Grand Concourse-14 Stories
Currently Zoned C8-3, Proposed Zone: R8
Block 2458, Lot 13

As proposed this residential building will be constructed on the east side of the Grand Concourse (Block 2458, Lot 13), approximately 144 feet north of the East 153rd Street intersection of the Grand Concourse. This site approximates 58,979 square feet and currently is used an off-street parking lot. The proposed new building will provide 52,088.98 gross residential square feet of offering 47 dwelling units.

A preliminary breakout of residential units include:

- Studio units: 10
- 1-Bedroom units: 14
- 2-Bedroom units: 14
- 3-Bedroom units: 9

Additional amenities include:

- A “community room” composed of 430 square feet
- An exterior garden area for passive recreation composed of 2,710 square feet.

This site is located within the Grand Concourse Preservation District, which was adopted by the City Planning Commission on September 29, 1989. Among numerous objectives of this special zoning district’s goals, is to preserve the residential character of the Grand Concourse. As

proposed, 702 Grand Concourse will satisfy all the objectives of the Grand Concourse Special Zoning District. Also noted is that no residential construction has taken place on the Grand Concourse south of East Tremont Avenue (approximately two miles to the north of this site) since 1963.

**180 East 156th Street-8 Stories plus basement and cellar
Currently Zoned C8-3, Proposed Zone: R7D/C1-4
Block 2458, Lot 35**

As proposed this residential building which will also include space for retail activity, will be constructed on the southwest corner of East 156th Street at Concourse Village West, (Block 2458, Lot 35). The site approximates 15,600 square feet of property which is occupied. A one-story building commercial building and a garage building approximating 20 feet in height are situated on this site. An outdoor parking lot which includes vehicle stackers is also on this site. Approximately 99 spaces are available at the outdoor lot. The proposed new building will provide 80,839 square feet of residential floor area divided into 96 units.

A preliminary breakout of residential units include:

- Studio units: 14
- 1 Bedroom units: 36
- 2 Bedroom units: 32
- 3 Bedroom units; 14

Additional amenities include:

- A “community room” composed of 500 square feet.
- An outdoor terrace accessible from the 1st floor composed of 4,433 square feet.
- An indoor garage providing 23 spaces would be accessible from Concourse Village West.

Pursuant to the R7D/C1-4 District, commercial development included in this proposal will offer 6,300 square feet of space. Access to the retail locations will be provided on East 156th Street. Cellar space will approximate 13,862 square feet.

**741 Concourse Village West-10 Stories
Currently Zoned C8-3, Proposed Zone: R7D
Block 2458, Lot 49**

As proposed this residential building will be constructed on the west side of Concourse Village West, (Block 2458, Lot 49). This interior lot approximates 14,000 square feet and is situated approximately 310 feet north of East 153rd Street. An exterior parking lot composed of 150 spaces occupies this site. The proposed new building will provide approximately 63,230 square feet of residential floor area divided into 70 dwelling units.

A preliminary breakout of residential units include:

- Studio units: 17
- 1 Bedroom units: 34
- 2 Bedroom units: 25
- 3 Bedroom units: 9

Additional amenities include:

- 9,500 square feet of community facility space
- A community room composed of 500 square feet
- An outdoor terrace accessible from the 2nd floor composed of 5,717 square feet
- An indoor garage providing 18 spaces would be accessible from Concourse Village West

Existing development of the surrounding community includes mid-rise residential buildings on the Grand Concourse and on East 156th Street. As allowed in a C8 zone, a live animal slaughter house is located on the Grand Concourse, adjacent to the southern property line of the proposed 702 Grand Concourse residence. Situated on the east side of Concourse Village West, adjacent to the northern property line of the proposed 741 Concourse Village West residence, is the Calvary Deliverance Church, (Block 2458, Lot 43). Concourse Village a Mitchell Lama development, which includes 5-high rise residential buildings is situated on the east side of Concourse Village West, between East 156th Street (Thurmond Munson Way) and East 158th Street. Also located north of East 156th Street is an elementary school and middle school. The Mott Haven High School campus located south of East 156th Street includes three high schools. Cardinal Hayes High School is located at the intersection of the east side of the Grand Concourse at East 153rd Street. Franz Sigel Park, consisting of seventeen acres is located on the west side of the Grand Concourse, between East 153rd and East 158th Streets. Retail activity is situated on East 161st Street, approximately three blocks north of the proposed development, and on East 156th Street, between the Grand Concourse on the West and Concourse Village West, on the East. Mass transit via subway (the #2, 4, & 5, as well as the “B”& “D” trains) is found within a four block radius of the site. Bus transportation operates on the Grand Concourse, East 149th Street and on East 161st Streets.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application was reviewed pursuant to CEQR and SEQRA and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on May 23, 2016.

BRONX COMMUNITY DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #4 held a public hearing on this application on June 28, 2016. A vote recommending approval of this application with conditions was 20 in favor, zero opposed and one abstaining. The conditions as approved by the Community Board was addressed to the Chairman of the Planning Commission in correspondence dated July 11, 2016. Highlights of those conditions include:

1. Requirement that preference for all jobs related to the project (union and non-union) be given to residents of Community District #4 and secondarily to the residents of the Borough of The Bronx. The developer will work with Community Board #4, the Bronx Borough President's Office and local organizations to advertise for all jobs and upon selection of a general contractor will provide a quarterly report on employment related to the project and all marketing and recruitment efforts through all phases of construction.
2. On-street parking is a critical quality of life issue here in the district and the displacement of over 100 parking spaces will exacerbate an on-going issue for area residents. Prior to construction the developer should supply the Board with a proposed parking plan for the project. This plan should include alternative arrangements with existing garages in the area with capacity. The developer should give ample notice to monthly and daily users of Lots 13 and 35, which has combined capacity of over 100 spaces. The developer should make every effort to replace those spaces in kind and they must be offered at rates that are affordable to area residents and are comparable to the rates currently offered. The developer should provide the option for monthly patrons with proposed rates to return to the garage upon completion of construction in writing.
3. While outside the purview of the proposed actions, the Board respectfully requests that the developer refine the design of 702 Grand Concourse to better match the considerable Art Deco character along the Grand Concourse. It should be noted that at most there are few developable parcels along the Grand Concourse and it is critically important that any new development reflect the built character of this area. The developer should present proposed designs to the community prior to submission of plans to the Department of Buildings.
4. The developer should work closely with the community to find a commercial use that serves the needs of area residents and diversifies the existing retail environment. The developer should consult with area residents and the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to target local business owners and entrepreneurs in Community District #4 for the proposed retail spaces.
5. Requirements that all retail tenants be given long-term affordable lease terms.

6. Approximately 140 units (65 percent) of the 213 units are targeted for tenants making less the 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), therefore we request that the community facility designated for Lot 49 be developed as a Universal Pre-K.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was convened by the Bronx Borough President on July 26, 2016. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. No members of the public present spoke to this matter. The hearing on this matter was therefore closed.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

This comprehensive residential development proposal represents one of the most high-profile projects to be initiated in Bronx Community District #4. If for no other reason, this is so, because it includes construction of the first residential building to be built on the Grand Concourse south of East Tremont Avenue in over 50 years. Likewise, this project will redefine Concourse Village West as a residential avenue rather than one noted more for its parking lots. Therefore I believe it is essential that the developer recognize that in many ways this project will serve as a flagship for all future development of the surrounding community.

This said, it is essential that the following matters be considered both by the applicant and all relevant city departments and agencies:

1. The City of New York must aggressively approve construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge that is mapped between the Grand Concourse on the West and Morris Avenue on the East. This bridge remains a top priority of my administration and has been a top priority of Bronx Community District #4 since the 1980's when the original bridge was deconstructed.
2. The applicant must consider relocating the main entrance to 702 Grand Concourse, from its current location situated on the south end of this proposed building, to the north end. As now planned, the entrance to this building will be less than 30 feet from an existing slaughterhouse where noxious odors are a persistent problem.
3. The applicant must be cognizant of how their construction equipment will impact traffic movement on Concourse Village West. This observation is especially relevant given the narrowness of Concourse Village West and the demands placed on this street by the presence of eight schools, garages and nearby retail activity.
4. I am pleased to know that when construction of these three buildings is complete the total number of off-street parking spaces will actually increase from the current count of 170, to 198. During construction I would anticipate that the applicant will do all that is necessary to minimize the impact of this project on parking availability.

5. I am gratified to understand that not less than 15 percent of the total number of units planned, will offer three-bedroom accommodations.

6. This project will satisfy Enterprise Green Communities mandates.

I am mindful of just how vital affordable housing is to all New Yorkers. I am therefore pleased to note that this project does consider a wide range of affordability that will meet the needs of low and moderate income families. I am also pleased that approximately 30 percent of those units being planned will be allocated to the 100 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) families.

I recommend approval of this application.