

**BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION  
ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 190102 ZMX  
2069 Bruckner Boulevard Rezoning**

**DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by Azimuth Development Group LLC pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section Nos. 4b & 7a:

- 1) Changing from an R5 District to an R7A District property bounded by Chatterton Avenue, Olmstead Avenue, Bruckner Expressway, and a line 300 feet westerly of Olmstead Avenue; and
- 2) Establishing within the R7A District a C2-4 District bounded by Chatterton Avenue, Olmstead Avenue, Bruckner Expressway, a line 300 feet westerly of Olmstead Avenue, a line midway between Chatterton Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard (northerly portion) and a line 100 feet westerly of Olmstead Avenue;

Borough of The Bronx, Community District #9, as shown on a diagram (for illustrative purposes only) dated January 7, 2019, and subject to the condition of CEQR Declaration E-515.

**BACKGROUND**

Approving this application will amend the Zoning Map, Section Numbers 4b and 7a pertains to property located on Block 3797, Lots 33 and p/o Lots 1 and 32; the Project Area, from an R5 District to a R7A/C2-4 District. This "Project Area" is bounded by Chatterton Avenue on the north, Bruckner Boulevard on the south, Olmstead Avenue to the east. Block 3797 is bounded by Pugsley Avenue on the west. The Project Area extends up to 300 feet west from Olmstead Avenue. Bruckner Boulevard and Olmstead Avenue are wide streets, Chatterton Avenue is a narrow street. A zoning text amendment to Appendix F of the Zoning Resolution to designate the Project Area a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area with Option 1 is pending approval with this application.

The Development Site includes Block 3797, Lot 33. This Development Site is composed of 61,101 square feet. Located on this property is a 1-story, vacant building approximating 10,200 square feet. At one time this building was a supermarket and subsequently a church. It will be demolished. An off-street parking lot offering 95 spaces surrounds the vacant building.

Approving this proposed Zoning Map amendment will facilitate construction of two buildings:

**Building A:** A 7-story residential building fronting on Chatterton Avenue

**Building B:** A 9-story residential building, fronting on Bruckner Boulevard and Olmstead Avenue.

Azimuth Development Group LLC (the applicant) is proposing both buildings and all associated development be considered as one proposal. Highlights of this proposal include:

- Total Development Cost: \$130 million
- Total Development Site: 61,101 square feet
- Total Floor Area: 281,064 square feet
- Total Residential Floor Area: 263,041 square feet (4.31 FAR)
- Total Commercial Space: 18,023 square feet (0.29 FAR)
- Total Residential Units: 330
- Permanently Affordable Units: 86 (25% of Residential Floor Area)
- Outdoor Recreational Area: 2,586 square feet
- Off-street Parking: 159 vehicular spaces  
(103 space minimum is required)

The off-street parking to be provided will be accessible via Bruckner Boulevard at the western lot line of this development. A total of 99 spaces will be located in the cellar and 60 spaces at-grade.

Development of both buildings will comply with Enterprise Green Environmental requirements.

### **Building A**

Building A is a 7-story residential building fronting on the south side of Chatterton Avenue. As Chatterton Avenue is a narrow street, this 7-story building “steps down” from 70 feet on the east, to 50 feet at its western property line. It is anticipated that this building will be developed pursuant to the Department of Housing Preservation and Development’s Open Door home ownership program. This building includes:

- 64,231 square feet of residential floor area
- 65 dwelling units, including:
  - 17 one-bedroom units-offering 548 gross square feet (gsf)
  - 33 two-bedroom units-offering 723 gsf
  - 15 three-bedroom units-offering 920 gsf
- Building A will not offer any studio units.

The applicant is proposing Building A participate in HPD's Open Door home ownership program for financing. Pursuant to this program, the Area Median Income (AMI) minimum is 80%. Consequently:

- 1 Bedroom units will market at: \$243,750 household income is: 84% of AMI
- 2 Bedroom units will market at: \$276,000 household income is: 82% of AMI
- 3 Bedroom units will market at: \$340,000 household income is: 89% of AMI

These sales prices and AMI's are subject to approval by HPD.

Amenities in Building A include:

- Washer and dryer equipment in each unit
- Energy Star appliances
- Will satisfy Enterprise Green environmental standards.

### **Building B**

Building B is a 9-story residential building fronting on north side of Bruckner Boulevard and on the west side of Olmstead Avenue. Entrance to this building will be via Olmstead Avenue. This building will be developed pursuant to HPD's Mixed Income Program: Mix and Match. This building includes:

- 198,810 square feet of residential floor area
- 18,023 square feet of commercial floor area
- 265 residential units, including:
  - 56 Studio units offering 450 gross square feet (gsf)
  - 111 one bedroom units offering: 650 gsf
  - 80 two bedroom units offering: 825 gsf
  - 18 three bedroom units offering: 1,150 gsf

The percentage of residential units to be allocated pursuant to Area Median Income include:

- 15% formally homeless
- 5% at 30% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- 5% at 40% of AMI
- 10% at 60% of AMI
- 25% at 70% of AMI
- 30% at 80% of AMI
- 10% at 90% of AMI

The 18,023 square feet of commercial space to be included in Building B will be accessible from both Bruckner Boulevard and Olmstead Avenue; two on Bruckner Boulevard and two on Olmstead Avenue. The disposal of refuse associated with these non-residential locations will be

accommodated on the cellar level. The Project Area is within an area where FRESH discretionary tax credits are available.

A majority of the residential development within the “Project Area” is composed of low-rise, one and two family homes on modest size lots. These homes are primarily located on Chatterton Avenue and Olmstead Avenue. A 10-story residential building surrounded by open space is located at the Bruckner Boulevard, Pugsley Avenue intersection. Similar mid-rise buildings are located on south side of Pugsley Avenue.

Commercial development is located on Bruckner Boulevard. The Bruckner Expressway (I-278) is situated at grade, essentially dividing Bruckner Boulevard in half with southbound traffic on the west side of the expressway, northbound on the east. A pedestrian crossing is available at Pugsley Avenue. Castle Hill Avenue offers vehicular crossing over the Bruckner Expressway. Access to the Bruckner Expressway is available at White Plains Road.

Access to subway service via the #6 train is available at the Parkchester station approximately one-half mile from the Project Area. So too, the Select Bus Service (SBS) Q44 is available at the Parkchester station. Local bus transportation via the Bx5, Bx22, Bx36 and Bx39 are available within a six block radius of the Project Site. The Project Site is within a Transit Zone.

## **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 City Planning Commission on January 7, 2019.

## **BRONX COMMUNITY DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING**

Bronx Community Board #9 held a public hearing on this application on January 18, 2019. A vote recommending approval of this application was 21 in favor, one against and one abstaining.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S PUBLIC HEARING**

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on this application was February 4, 2019. Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. A member of the public representing Local 32BJ submitted written testimony. No other members of the public sought to speak and the hearing was closed.

## **BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

I want to initiate my comments on this application by expressing my strong support for the Open Door option which the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is now offering developers of affordable housing. This new program will provide those who qualify an opportunity to own their new residence. In The Bronx where any kind of home ownership remains the lowest in New York State, Open Door will give people a chance to make a financial commitment to their community and in return provide them an investment that can yield significant benefits as their equity increases over time. I commend those associated with this application for their participation in Open Door.

Looking specifically at the two residential buildings (Building A, Building B) approving this application will facilitate, I would want to see unit size increase. This is especially so in Building A, which will offer the sale of units pursuant to Open Door. In this case not only is the buyer likely to remain in the unit for a time that would exceed that of a renter, but when that buyer wishes to liquidate his/hers asset, square foot size is absolutely critical.

I am mindful of HPD's minimal unit size guidelines, and as my commentary record will demonstrate, I believe these minimums are too restrictive. Now however, as we consider an owner option made possible by Open Door, it is essential that HPD differentiate unit size minimums between buildings where residents rent and those in which residents own an asset.

I also believe a policy that encourages the proliferation of studio units and by so doing discourages 2 and 3 bedroom units, must be reconsidered. Again, this is especially so when owner occupied buildings are being planned, as buyers are very likely to remain in their unit as family size increases. It is to the credit of this applicant that Building A excludes studios, favoring 2 and 3 bedroom units. My only additional comment regarding Building A pertains to the roof areas created by the "stepdown" configuration of the building. While I understand that these areas will not be accessible to residents whose windows will directly overlook them, I suggest some form of landscaping or green roof be considered for these areas.

Given the proximity of this development to the Bruckner Expressway I advocate for the installation of triple-pained windows throughout the proposed complex. This would all but eliminate the endless din caused by the expressway while also dramatically reducing heat loss in winter and cool loss in summer. It is also critical that retailers not be permitted to install exterior signs that are specifically designed to distract a driver's attention. As I have seen across The Bronx, LED technology affords the installation of signs and lighting that is so bright, in addition to presenting a real hazard for drivers, the presence of such signs presents an intrusion that no nearby resident should have to tolerate. Therefore I am proposing that the applicant include in a perspective retailer's lease the size and any other relevant stipulations associated with signage illumination. Likewise, if the perspective occupant of a retail location will in fact offer professional services, for example a pre-school, that the exterior windows remain such that ambient light will improve the overall profile of this development.

Finally, I am concurring with Bronx Community Board #9's suggestion that a "roof" be considered for installation over the planned exterior parking area. Such an amenity would

dramatically improve the value of those investing in this development, but would virtually eliminate the presence of this area on all those who otherwise will overlook this lot.

I recommend approval of this application.