



Jamaica's court-ly building preserved

By DONALD BERTRAND

An almost \$200 million housing project set to begin in the first half of next year will sculpt the facade of the old Queens Family Court in Jamaica into the front of a new 12-story, 350-unit mixed-use building.

The go-ahead is awaiting completion of a city land-use review.

The preservation of the facade of the old court was a requirement of a city Economic Development Corp. Request For Proposals issued in 2004, said Alex Adams, who is in charge of the project for Dermot Co.

"We believe it makes for a very interesting and somewhat unique and very attractive building," said Adams.

The site is located at the corner of Parsons Blvd. and 89th Ave.

The Italian Renaissance-style building was built in 1928 as the Parsons Central Library. It became the Family Court in 1966. The court moved to a new 280,000-square-foot facility on Jamaica Ave. in 2003.

The project has received strong support both at the local and borough levels. Next month it will be reviewed by the City Planning Commission, and then goes to the City Council for its okay.

Community Board 12 voted 30 to 0, with three abstentions, to approve the plans. Board 12 chairwoman Gloria Black praised Dermot Co. for its "willingness to make adjustments" to its proposal.

At a borough land-use hearing earlier this month, Borough President Helen Marshall said she "would challenge any objection to this project. It is going to be wonderful for the Jamaica area."

Plans call for the project to have two levels of underground parking with about 500



spaces. The ground floor and a small space on the second floor will have approximately 40,000 square-feet of retail space.

As part of the RFP, EDC required space at low rent for community facilities, that space, 20,000 square-feet, will be located on the third and fourth floors and will have its own lobby and elevator on Parsons Blvd.

The residential lobby will be located on 89th Ave. Plans call for some 20% of the residential units to be for sale as co-ops. They will be available through the city's Housing Development Corp.'s middle income program.

The apartments will be available to families earning no more than 175% of the area median income (AMI). For a family of four, that is about \$120,000 to \$125,000 in annual earnings.

The balance of the units, or 80%, will be rentals under HDC mixed income program. Of those, 20% are for low income families earning 50% of the area median income or \$35,000 for family of four; 40% are for middle income families earning no more than 130% of AMI - or about \$90,000 - and the remainder of the units will be market rate.

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