

HACKENSACK

Six-story luxury rental complex proposed for former Bruce the Bed King site in Hackensack

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HACKENSACK — The City Council last week took the initial step to move forward with a 130-unit, six-story luxury rental complex for the site of Bruce the Bed King, a shuttered longtime fixture on Main Street, and several neighboring storefronts.

The site spans the block of Main Street from Maple Avenue to Clinton Place and sits across the street from the closed Sears building.

The project fits with city officials' overall vision for Main Street, said Deputy Mayor Kathleen Canestrino.

“These properties are going to be hugely important to the downtown, and we’re all looking forward to it,” she said. “To me, it’s a renaissance. The city is reinventing itself, and it’s been long overdue.”

The proposal will have a second hearing Feb. 22. A more detailed proposal will then go before the Planning Board, which last year designated the site as an area in need of redevelopment.

Bruce the Bed King, a mainstay in the city since 1954, closed its doors in 2019 after its owners, Bruce and Robert Wiener, decided to retire and sell the building to an interested developer. The three-generation business opened its first store, called Wiener’s, in the city’s downtown in the 1920s. The sign atop Bruce the Bed King, bearing a larger-than-life caricature of the business’s namesake, became a city landmark.

Zohara 463 LLC, which has not yet officially been designated by the city as the developer for the site, bought the 13,000-square-foot property from the Wieners in 2019. Over the past two

years, the group has purchased the remainder of the low-rise buildings along that stretch of Main Street.

Retiring?: Kings rarely retire. But Bruce the Bed King's owners will do just that

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The planned six-story complex with retail on the first level would eventually replace five buildings — Bruce the Bed King, two office buildings, a restaurant and a vacant storefront — and a parking lot.

The developer is looking to build a luxury complex with 130 apartments, a pool, an exercise room and community space at the site, said Gerald Salerno, an attorney representing Zohara 463.

“The goal is for it to be a nice, upscale project that will complement and continue the trend of development along the northern section of Main Street,” he said. “The client is anxious to move forward through the process.”

Salerno, who has represented developers of several other projects along Main Street, said he hoped to appear before the Planning Board in early spring and begin construction this summer.

The proposed development at 463-483 Main St. is one of many large, mixed-use projects planned, under construction or recently built in the city. The downtown has undergone a building boom in recent years. More than 1,000 apartments have been added to the area, with another 2,500 in the planning stages.

“I think this project is going to contribute considerably to what we’re trying to do down there,” said Albert Dib, the city’s director of redevelopment. “We’ve been careful not to allow too much density, with the exception of a couple of high-rises. We want to maintain a sense of scale along Main Street with retail frontage.”

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