

THE LEGACY PROJECT

New Housing New York
Best Practices in Affordable, Sustainable, Replicable Housing Design





THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

Dear Friends:


This publication documents the evolution of a new stage in the development, design, and construction of one of our City's most important assets: affordable housing.

Not since New York developed the country's first tenement laws more than a century ago has the need for innovation in housing been so great. In less than 20 years, New York City has grown by nearly 840,000 new residents and will add a million more by the year 2030. A growing population reaffirms our City as a place of opportunity. It also, however, poses significant challenges to New York City's infrastructure, environment, and affordable housing market. In response to these challenges, the New Housing New York Legacy Project brings together exciting new approaches to affordable, sustainable housing.

Our Administration continues to implement the New Housing Marketplace, which is the largest affordable housing plan any city has ever undertaken, providing affordable homes to more than 500,000 New Yorkers by 2013. At the same time, through *PlaNYC*—our plan to build a greener, greater New York—we have committed to reducing our City's greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent in the next two decades. Innovative programs such as the NHNY Legacy Project will play an integral role in our City's ability to achieve both our affordable housing and environmental goals by demonstrating that design excellence and environmental sustainability can effectively be integrated into affordable housing development. As a model for other cities, we hope that the NHNY Project will attract attention to a simple but critically important idea: environmentally sustainable housing can be both affordable and financially viable.

I am pleased to recognize those associated with the New Housing New York Legacy Project for their inspired contributions to our City. Together with community leaders, we will continue working to build record levels of affordable housing and improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,


Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

This work is dedicated to **Margaret Helfand, FAIA.** Margaret was one of the initiators of this effort toward the development of affordable housing, and kept all of the members of the Steering Committee focused on the key objectives: design excellence, innovation, and risk-taking. Her intelligence, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm are sorely missed.

Introduction



In the last decade, New York City has grown considerably, welcoming hundreds of thousands of newcomers each year. It has received more immigrants than ever before in a comparable time period. This rapid population growth has created unique concerns in housing design and construction that call for innovative designs and strategic reform.

Just over 70 years ago, New York City built its first public housing project, First Houses, a densely-organized tenement complex on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, rehabilitated by the NYC Housing Authority to bring natural light and air into the apartments through landscaped courtyards—a response to the health and safety issues that arose during the Great Depression. At the outset of the 21st Century the need for well-designed affordable housing was not a consequence of a dismal economy but of a sustained real-estate boom. Luxury condominiums and rentals are rising today in every borough, the result of a carefully orchestrated revitalization of the decimated cityscape that was New York in the 1960s and 1970s, when blight, arson, and abandonment marked the failed experiments of mid-century urban renewal initiatives, rent decontrol legislation, and social inequities. By 2000, the city—thanks to multiple mayoral administrations and strong-willed community groups—had bounced back. But the rebound caused a gap for low-, moderate-, and middle-income residents. Current efforts to right the balance include Mayor Bloomberg’s New Housing Marketplace Plan—promulgated by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development, the NYC Housing Development Corporation, and the NYC Housing Authority—neighborhood rezoning by the NYC Department of City Planning, and the collaborative efforts of nonprofit and private-sector housing sponsors.

Carrying on the tradition of First Houses, the NHNY Legacy Project, a collaboration of experts in multi-family housing, finance, building codes, and development, and backed by the AIA150 Blueprint for America initiative, may well serve as a model for the innovative development, design, and delivery of affordable, sustainable dwellings. Leaders in the various fields joined to challenge their peers to change

the way affordable housing had been designed and built. The NHNY Steering Committee convened public and private entities and solicited qualifications from teams of architects and developers to rethink the mechanisms of housing procurement in New York City. It is a prototypical demonstration project, representing the kind of public-private initiative encouraged under the New Housing Marketplace Plan. That plan aims to preserve or construct 165,000 affordable units citywide for 500,000 New Yorkers within a ten-year period.

While the competition dealt with generic issues it also raised questions. It called for a mixed-use, mixed-income project on a City-owned site containing a defunct rail line in the South Bronx. The site is an irregularly-shaped brownfield that required rezoning. Given that one of the competition’s ambitions was replicability, is it possible that a design generated in response to such conditions can be replicated elsewhere? How can the kind of effort brought to bear on the NHNY Legacy Project be harnessed for future projects? What are the best ways, through competitions or otherwise, to raise the bar for design excellence and innovation? As one member of the jury noted, selection of the winning proposal “is the beginning... not the end.” Perhaps, as another juror suggested, the reproducible aspects are to be found in the “spirit of the process” as well as in the specifics of the project itself.

During the competition two primary questions were asked repeatedly: “Are there going to be more competitions like this in New York?” and “How do we organize competitions like this in our city?” It became clear that in order to encourage others to replicate the project and process, the Steering Committee needed to officially document as much of it as possible. That’s the purpose of this publication. A number of documents developed for this project, including the Offering Package, the Request for Proposals (RFP), technical review scoring worksheets, and jury review worksheets are available by request, to offer more detailed information to those interested in launching similar projects in their cities, contact mark@cplusga.com.

Key members of the Steering Committee*:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rick Bell, FAIA | Executive Director, AIA New York Chapter |
| Lance Jay Brown, FAIA (Founding Member) | Lance Jay Brown Architecture + Urban Design |
| Rex Curry | City College Architectural Center |
| Beatriz De La Torre | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Simone Dennerly, R.A. | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Steven Faicco, R.A. | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Mark Ginsberg, FAIA | Curtis + Ginsberg Architects |
| Dan Gorczycki | Granite Partners |
| Judy James Hernandez | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Karen Hu | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Karen Kubey | Curtis + Ginsberg Architects |
| Holly Leicht | NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development |
| Thomas McMahon | TLM Associates |
| Helen Ng | Domus A.D., LLC |
| David Resnick, AIA | NYC Dept. of Design & Construction |
| Mary Elizabeth Rusz, AIA | AIA New York Chapter Housing Committee |
| Tara Siegel, Assoc. AIA | Rose Fellow, Pratt Center for Community Development |
| Evan Supcoff, AIA | HNTB Architecture |
| Susan Wright, AIA | Gruzen Samton Architects |

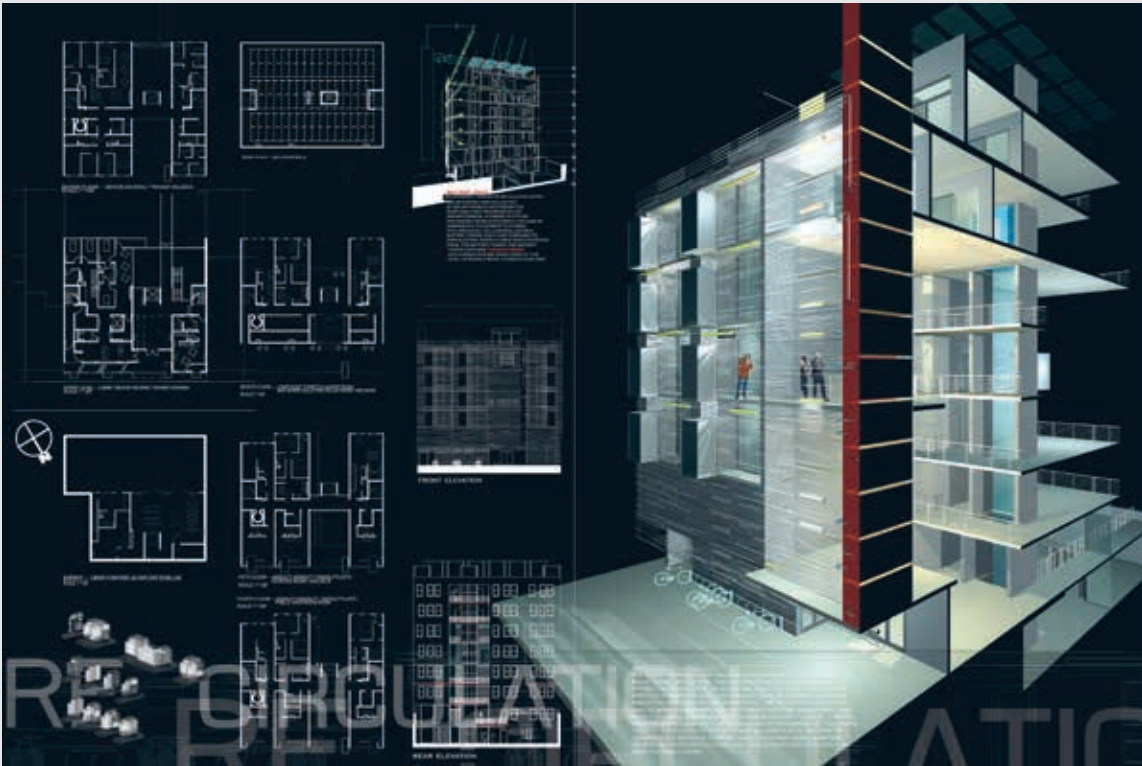
** Listed affiliations were in effect at the time of the Committee's formation.*



Site A / Manhattan

1st PRIZE
Clinton W. Brister, Melody Yiu, Choi Law

The design proposal for the New Housing infill in Harlem was based on recirculation. Recirculation is the act of circulating a force, material, or flow again and again in a continuous manner. Applying this methodology, the project took on its own character and developed into its own prototype. The result produced such aims as mass production and adaptability into the urban fabric that would eventually take over the entire block and/or city. Certain systems and resources play a vital role in the survival of the prototype, yet the flexibility that is served allows it to be solitary or combined in a series to furnish units for senior living quarters, transit housing for the homeless, single dwelling units, and/or multiple family living.



Site A / Manhattan

2nd PRIZE
Andrew Berman Architects

Our infill strategy begins with the repair of the street wall by re-establishing the continuity of surface. The proposed street façade engages the scale, rhythm and proportions of the adjacent fabric. At the same time, it creates a dynamic plane that can be varied and reconfigured from within. The building is conceived as a prototype that can be adapted to the particulars of each site (width and height). In the Harlem case study, the lot is divided in two modules that correspond to the typical brownstone width. Each module contains an elevator and two stair towers, creating a flexible circulation infrastructure within the building while also allowing the building height to vary based on site requirements.





PROJECT SITE

Site Location:
Bronxchester Urban Renewal Area
Site: 1A (Block 2359, p/o Lot 3)

Square Footage:
Approximately 60,000 square feet

Zoning:
Current zoning: M1-1
Required rezoning to residential with commercial overlay and open public space

Property Value (estimated): \$4,000,000
Acquisition Price \$1

Types of Development:
Mixed-use: first floor commercial/community space and residential on upper floors

Affordability:
Mixed-income

RFQ/RFP Release Date:
Summer 2006

redevelopment, the City Planning Commission in 1968 designated this neighborhood as part of the original South Bronx Model Cities Urban Renewal Plan. The site is part of what is now the Bronxchester Urban Renewal Area, which includes several vibrant commercial thoroughfares and rich transportation resources: two subway lines, the Melrose Avenue Metro-North stop, and seven bus routes. The Hub also enjoys excellent vehicular access from Manhattan, from Long Island, and from points north.

To combat the neighborhood’s severe decline, more than \$2 billion of public and private money has been invested in housing and other redevelopment activity in the South Bronx since the 1990s, mostly in the Melrose Commons and Yankee Stadium Urban Renewal Areas. When the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan is completed, more than 3000 units of low-income, moderate-income, and market-rate apartments and townhouses will have been added to the housing stock.

Another project under construction will stimulate the revival of the Bronx Hub as a business center as well as a residential neighborhood: a 160,000-square-foot mixed-use project that will house the Department of Finance’s new offices, commercial spaces for national and local retailers, and the renovation of a municipal parking garage. And there will be a new “Plaza at The Hub”, a mix of new office space, big-box and local retail, entertainment, a multiplex movie theater, and more than 200,000 square feet of new housing. The NYC Transit Authority will preserve and rehabilitate the historic Jackson Avenue elevated subway station, which opened in 1904 and provides service for two subway lines. The work scheduled for this station includes restoration of station houses, balconies, and stairs. And the forthcoming availability of high-speed broadband access technology will help attract more businesses to the area and contribute to its continued economic development. These high-profile projects will dramatically change the nature of this area of the South Bronx, offering development prospects to the neighborhood and extending commercial activity from the core Hub area.

The NHNY Legacy Project team capitalized on the redevelopment efforts already underway to build a signature housing project.

Opportunities

- Neighborhood in the beginning stages of redevelopment with other high-profile projects in development in the immediate area
- Signature project establishing a prototype for future affordable housing endeavors in New York City and beyond
- Nominal land price
- Innovation in affordable housing design
- Public-private initiative with significant benefits for the community and for the design-development team

Constraints

- Brownfield site with environmental clean-up requirements
- Site has an irregular shape and significant grade change with immediate adjacency to a legally-abandoned railroad track
- Financing gap, although public subsidy sources are available
- Balance between profitability, design and construction innovation

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The site is located within Bronx Community District 1 (CD 1), an area that is predominantly Hispanic (71%) and African-American (26%), with median household incomes at approximately \$21,870 for a family of four (or 35% of the Area Median Income -AMI). A significant percentage of residents in CD 1 (94%) rent their apartments compared to the rest of the city (70%), presenting an opportunity to increase home ownership in the area. 35% of the residents in CD 1 are 18 years old or younger, compared to the city average of 24.2%. According to the 2000 Census, the population in the district increased by 7.2% from 1990. Studies indicate that the population increase is continuing as immigrants and newcomers move into New York City. The rising cost of housing across the New York Metro area has affected the South Bronx and its residents. Residents in CD1 live in more crowded living conditions than the city average.

Studios and one-bedrooms tend to rent below \$1,000 per month, with two-bedrooms renting for \$1,250-\$1,500 per month. Sales prices vary from \$105,000 for a junior one-bedroom to \$189,000 for a three-bedroom apartment. According to the 2000 Census, the value of homes in zip code 10455 ranged from \$60,000 to \$399,999, with the largest percentage of homes between \$150,000 and \$174,999. A recent survey of sales transactions within a half-mile of the site showed that a high percentage of homes sold in the range of \$120-\$250 per square foot. Newly constructed three-family townhouses in the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area are currently selling for over \$500,000 (\$150 per square foot), made affordable to middle- and moderate-income families with public subsidies.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Understanding community needs is an ongoing process, as the demographics of our society are ever-changing. With a growing population over the age of sixty, and projections of longer life expectancy, new challenges are being presented to the design of housing and community development. It is essential to stay in touch with our neighbors, remain committed to good design, and constantly push the envelope beyond conventional design standards.

A key challenge designers and tenants face is overcoming preconceptions about the appearance of affordable housing. Affordable housing needs significant architecture to represent it. From securing a site, to finding creative ways to hurdle the numerous roadblocks presented by regulations, cost constraints, and often the large number of agencies and individuals involved, these projects call for architects with values and dedication that go beyond formal design, and to help enlighten the general public on preserving cultural and economic diversity in neighborhoods.

The NHNY Legacy Project presents a platform for architect and developer teams to focus community attention on a design that begins with a dialogue among the parties from the outset of a project.

As stated by Steering Committee Co-Chair Siegel, “We must be curious and inquisitive, constantly observing and studying designs that really work for the community, developing design solutions that resolve physical, social, and cost issues, and producing buildings and environments that the entire community can be proud of now and for generations to come.... Design quality, especially when integrated into publicly-subsidized affordable housing, is one of the most powerful indicators of the value that carefully-thought-out design solutions bring to all New Yorkers.”

It is common to involve the community once a project is already partially through the design process, when it’s often too late to deal with many of the desires presented by community members. Discussing the NHNY Legacy Project with the community before the RFP was completed enabled the Steering Committee to incorporate the community’s thoughts into the text of the RFP and to create a sense of belonging and pride for the community residents.

In September 2005, HPD attended Community Board meetings in the South Bronx to discuss the development of the site identified for the NHNY Legacy competition. Bronx community members expressed these preferences regarding new residential development:

- Keep the elderly from being priced out of their neighborhoods
- Provide affordable home-ownership options to keep successful youth from moving to “better” neighborhoods
- Provide more services and amenities
- Create mixed-income housing

A preliminary public workshop sponsored by Bronx Community Board 1 was held in May 2006, before the RFP was issued, with a second workshop held in September 2006, shortly after the five Finalist Teams were selected.

Top community priorities articulated by participants in the May discussion were:

- On-site power production
- A minimum of 50% of the units affordable to low-income people in the community
- Affordable home ownership, diversity, civic pride and stability
- Quality and beneficial retail uses: health food store or supermarket, bookstore, etc.
- A showcase for sustainable design elements
- Building should blend in with neighborhood context, not a “new box”
- Recreation / community center space, daycare and programs for youth
- A beautiful and safe building and community
- Green space on interior and exterior
- Light and open space
- Generous room sizes with usable space to accommodate furniture comfortably
- Private dining room areas
- Windows in bathrooms and kitchens
- Laundry for residents in each unit or floor, not in basement, with exterior views

The RFP did not demand that these priorities be included, but simply pointed to “what we heard” from the community, to inform and influence the competitors in the development of their schemes. The Finalist Teams’ proposals reflected the knowledge gained from this community outreach.



The Finalists



JURY PROCESS

Jury member David Burney, FAIA, explained that the Technical Review Committees' evaluations mattered because they enabled the jury to choose knowledgeably from the 32 first-phase entries. In the second phase it would not have been possible for the jury to go into the depth needed for looking at the five finalists' proposals, not only at the designs but also at the structure of the teams and the depth of the submissions, without that support.

"The first round went surprisingly quickly," he stated. "Getting down from 32 schemes to five I thought would be a mammoth task. But in the end what really swayed the jury into a fairly swift unanimous conclusion was that one could very quickly eliminate teams that had not passed muster in the threshold requirements – if they had not understood or gotten the financing right, or if there was not adequate sustainability.

"We were looking for innovation. It wasn't just another housing site on which some affordable housing would be built and people would move in. We were looking for... something new and innovative, and something that we felt was reproducible. With those two criteria we got to the five finalists relatively quickly. Then those five were allowed to develop their projects further, and we had the final round a couple of months later.

"I think we spent as much time on the five as we did on the 32. It was because they were all strong schemes. As we've said repeatedly, we wish there were five sites because almost consciously... we picked proposals that had approached the project from slightly different aspects and had somewhat different solutions. They all had individual merits, and the jury spent a long time coming to the final winner."



EXHIBITIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

An NHNY exhibition at the Center for Architecture, New York's hub for public architectural discourse, presented the combination of design and financing for the sustainable, affordable housing production of the project's finalist entries, highlighting the innovations of each and distinguishing the competition winner.

Preparation for the NHNY Legacy Project Exhibition entitled “POWERHOUSE New Housing New York” began immediately after the jury selected a winning team in January 2007. Abby Bussel was brought in to curate the exhibition, and Casey Maher was the exhibition designer. They worked closely with staff at the Center for Architecture, members of the NHNY Steering Committee, and the five Finalist Teams to make sure the exhibition accurately represented the project. The exhibition showed the people, projects, and public policies that fuel the affordable housing landscape in New York City.

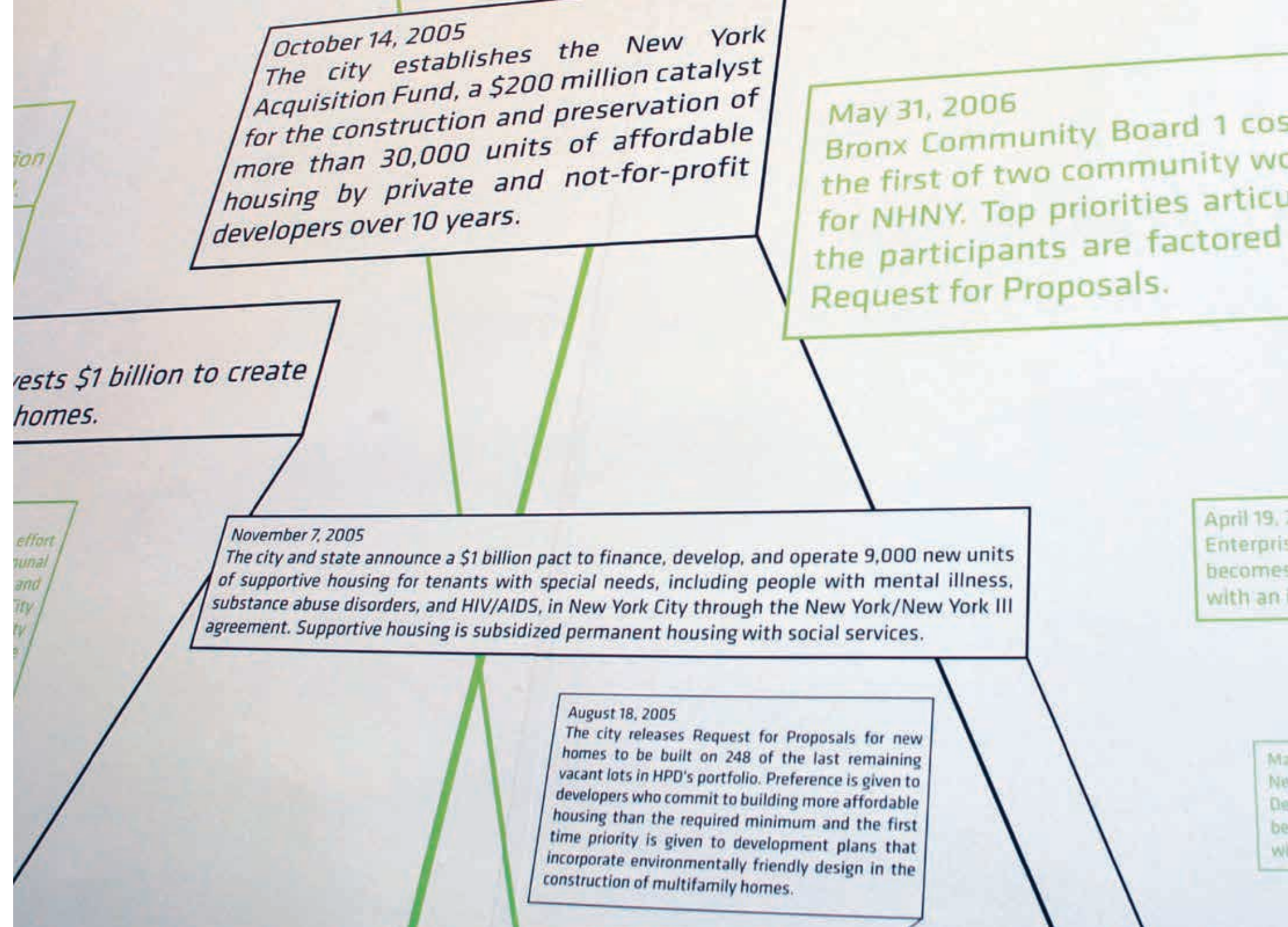
POWERHOUSE New Housing New York officially opened with a grand reception at the Center for Architecture on March 22, 2007. Commissioner Shaun Donovan opened the event by describing the process and importance of NHNY, and said he was enthused about the future of the project. Commissioner David Burney, FAIA, spoke about the role of the jury and the process of the competition with regard to design quality, and members of the winning team, Phipps / Rose / Dattner / Grimshaw, spoke briefly about their proposal.

As New York City's first juried design competition for affordable, sustainable housing, the New Housing New York Legacy Project generated creative, replicable approaches to urban development. The exhibition focused on the NHNY competition and set it within the context of the city's efforts to preserve and develop sustainable, financially viable residences for low- and middle-income New Yorkers. The show's emphasis was on the future of housing in the city, as represented by the competition winner PRDG, the four finalists, and the development mechanisms put in place by Mayor Bloomberg's 10-year New Housing Marketplace initiative and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development.

A highlighted feature of the exhibition was a large-scale graphic timeline, which followed the project's trajectory in the context of the mayor's plan and the city's housing landscape at-large. (See Appendix for complete timeline.)

While the exhibition was on display a series of four panel discussions was held at the Center, with many of the finalists and jurors describing their approaches and expressing their thoughts about how this competition can stimulate future efforts.

Another exhibition of Via Verde materials was featured as part of an AIA Blueprint for America show, on view at AIA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. from April to June 2008.



Finalists' Proposals





SEG / Behnisch / studioMDA / Full Spectrum / Hamlin

This team's scheme is based on three main principles: environmental sustainability, social sustainability, and fiscal sustainability. The team wanted simple architecture, architecture with a social agenda, and architecture that is environmentally responsible.

A.CONCEPT

In developing its proposal for a "livable community," in which sustainability is as much socio-economic as it is environmental, the team leveraged the site's "length and change in grade to design for natural light and promote opportunities for social interchange, community building, and 'active' living." Set within an undulating landscape, the scheme's five towers are oriented to optimize natural light, views, and air circulation (cross-ventilation) in the apartments. The heights of the buildings are based on shading diagrams, and keeping them as low as possible to promote contact with the public realm. Each core contains only four units per floor, to promote a sense of ownership and encourage occupants to get to know their neighbors, to form a functioning community. The staircases have windows to provide daylight and encourage their use, and the towers' boldly-colored façades aim to create a "vibrant neighborhood."

B.COMMUNITY

The site's extensive green-space, which is programmed for healthful living (vegetable gardens, community gardens, playgrounds), peels up at its edges to reveal street-level community-oriented spaces, including a Language and Learning Center and a Health and Wellness Center. The ground level also holds a community center, a daycare center, and laundry facilities.





Legacy Collaborative: Dermot / Nos Quedamos / Kiss + Cathcart / Melrose Associates

This scheme consists of a single slab running the entire length of the site, embracing the large scale of the project. A major double-height entry is located opposite a right-of-way approaching the site, creating a central gathering space. Health and active recreation facilities are organized toward the southern end of the site and retail facilities toward the north.

A.CONCEPT

Four organizing categories – quality of life, living systems, building systems, and urban design strategies – drove the design for this 13-story scheme. Mediating between the tallest and shortest buildings in the immediate area, the tower breaks into three low-rise wings that form street-level courtyards. With its west façade covered in vines, the project is meant to be a “living building,” one that helps to filter clean air into interior spaces to reduce the effects of pollution and the community’s high asthma rates. The vines are rooted in tiered ledges at the top of the building, and visibly render the varying experiences of the passing seasons. Metal cowls separate the planted creepers from operable windows and doors, and provide opportunities for balconies.

B.COMMUNITY

Assessing the site as a pedestrian and vehicular “gap” in the context of adjacent developments, the team aimed to “mediate existing conditions” by providing a central east-west entrance for both residential and community users that doubles as a view-corridor through the building. The lower floors of the building hold a fitness center, daycare center, and retail. The tower roof houses a community room and laundry facilities.



A.CONCEPT

B.COMMUNITY

Discussions were held with locally-oriented cultural and educational organizations (South Bronx Food Cooperative, Ghetto Film School, Ballet Hispanico, Phyl's Academy Preparatory School). These facilities are on the ground floor and lower level. Interior "hinge spaces" at the courtyards facilitate residents' interaction and use of playrooms, laundry, reading areas, and sunlit stairwells.



Winning Proposal

Phipps | Rose | Dattner | Grimshaw.

In January 2007, Phipps / Rose / Dattner / Grimshaw (PRDG) was named the winning architect-developer team.





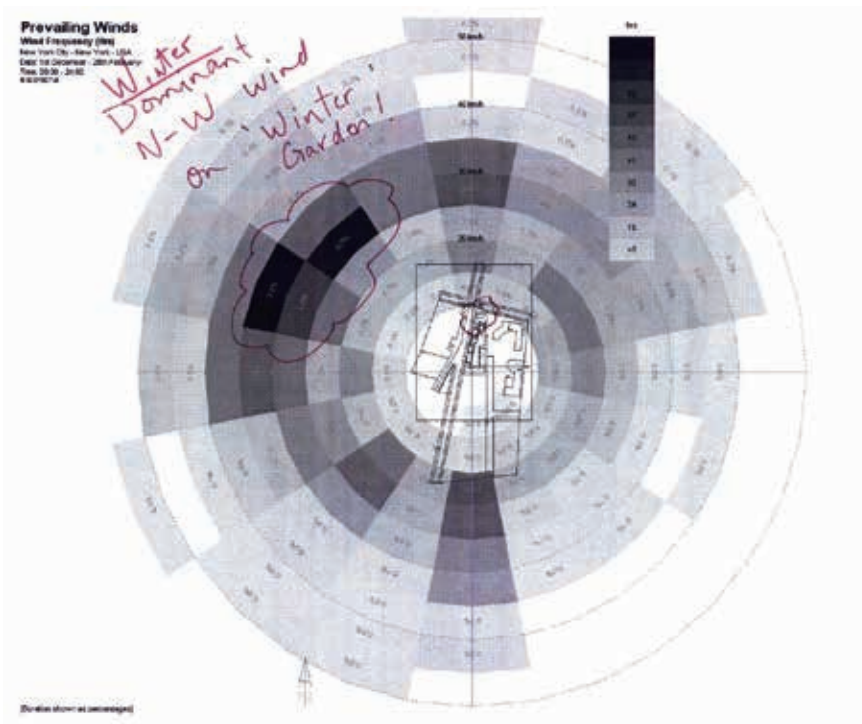
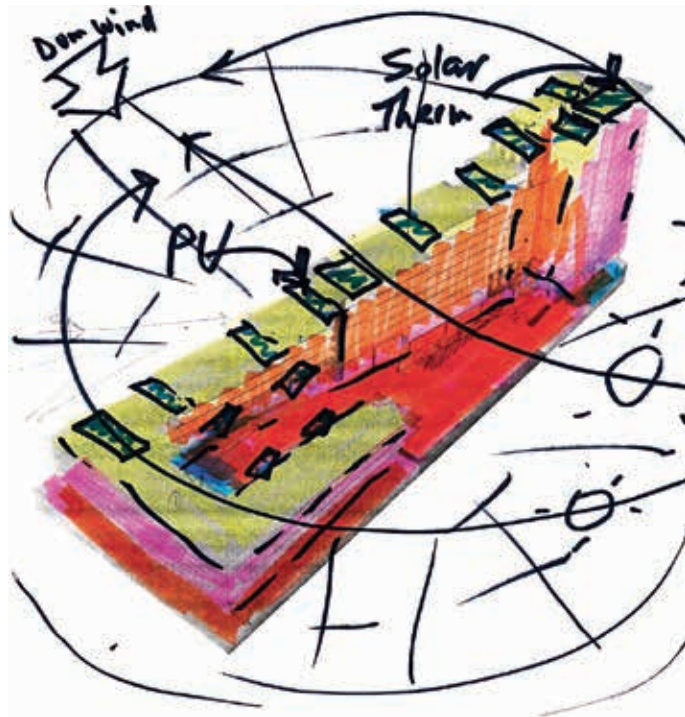
“We are pleased and honored to have been selected by the New Housing New York jury to work with HPD to help develop a next generation of housing that is affordable and green. We are inspired by a great vision to create places that are environmentally and socially responsible, but to do it within the constraints of affordable housing budgets and important community input. One of the great pleasures of this competition was combining so much great thought from knowledgeable individuals, yet coming together as a team. We became a community so that we could design a community!”

– Phipps / Rose / Dattner / Grimshaw

C.SUSTAINABILITY

By incorporating sustainable material choices, efficient mechanical systems and renewable strategies, Via Verde aims to achieve LEED Gold. The project includes roof gardens (storm water control, rainwater harvesting, enhanced insulation, reduced heat absorption, fruit and vegetable farming with composting); trellis and stair canopies with integrated photovoltaic panels; heat pumps served by a high-efficiency condensing hot water boiler and cooling towers; energy-efficient operable windows; enhanced

ventilation to apartments and individual control of heating and cooling; water-conserving plumbing fixtures; and low- and no-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints and sealants. Sun screens will shade the south and west façades. These energy-efficient features will reduce utility bills for tenants, increasing affordability, and help improve indoor air quality.



Realization







VIA VERDE

700













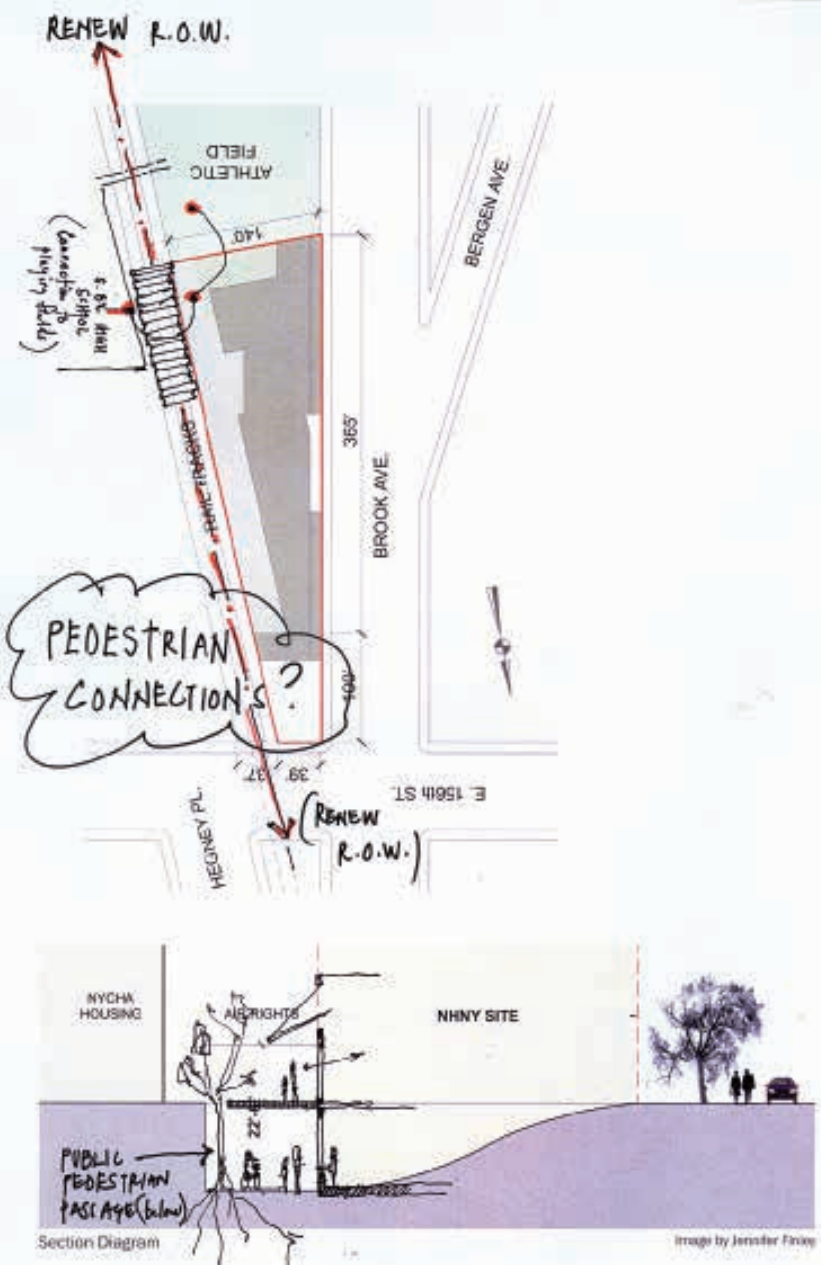


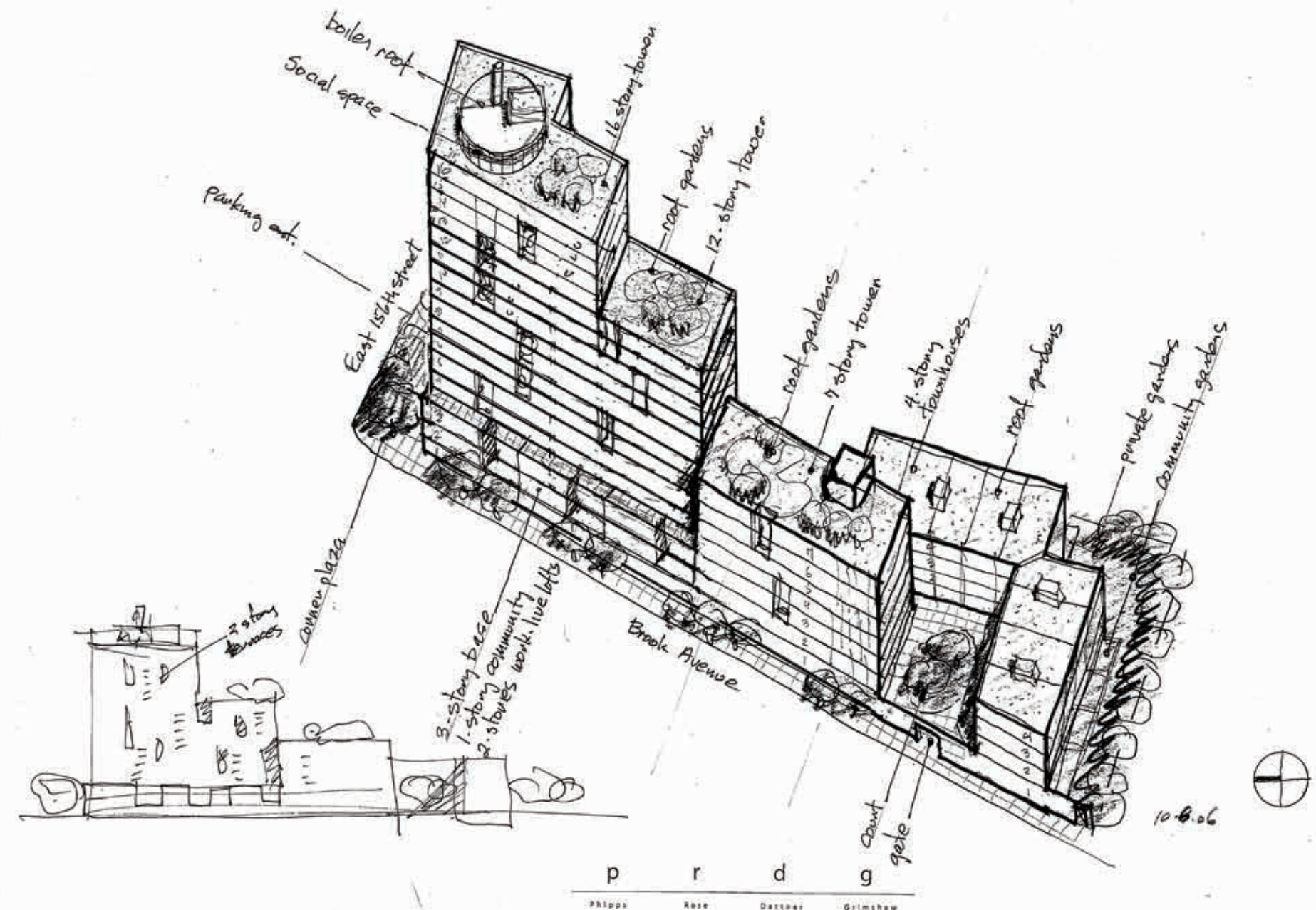
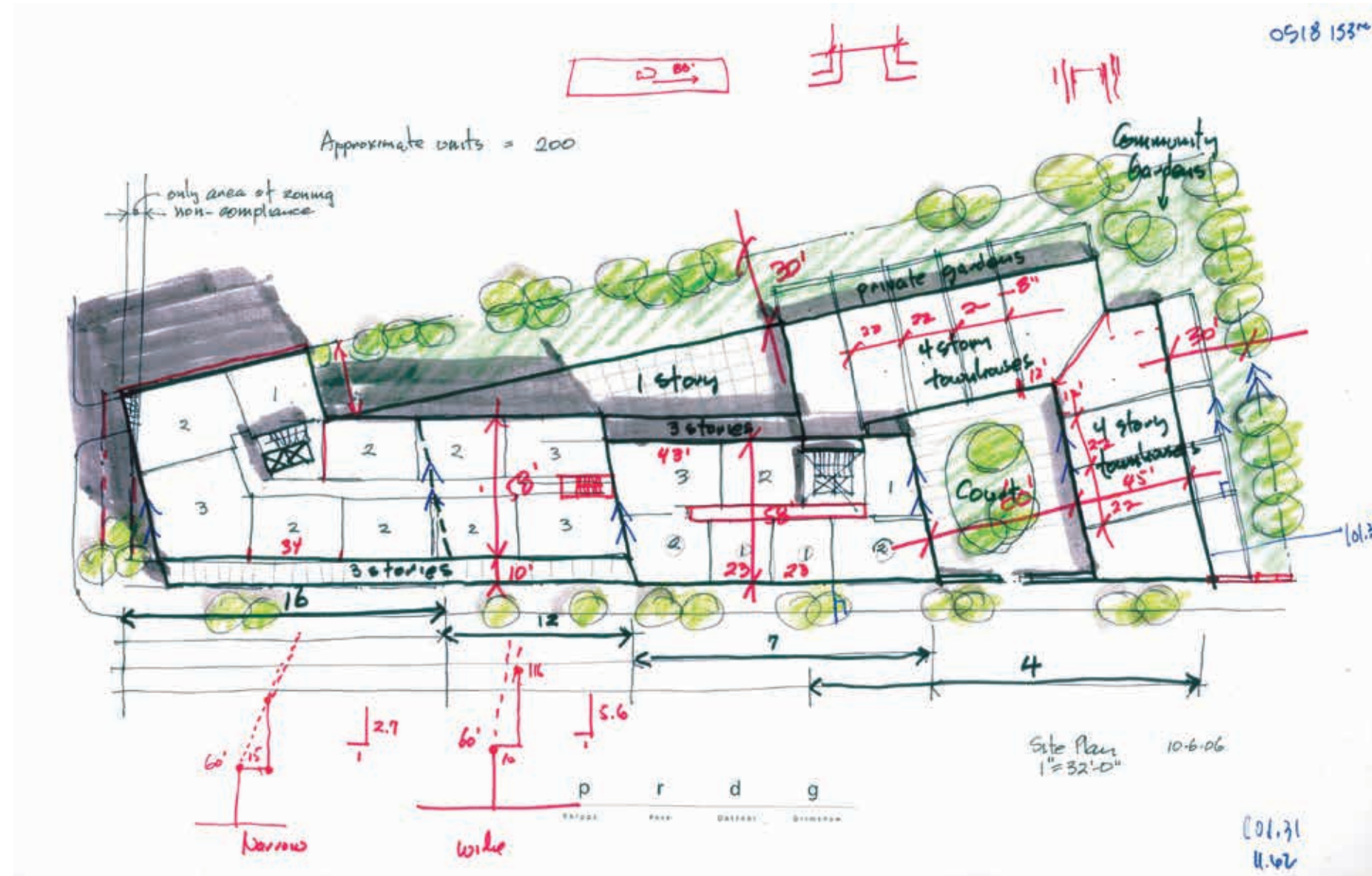
Process

INITIAL THOUGHTS

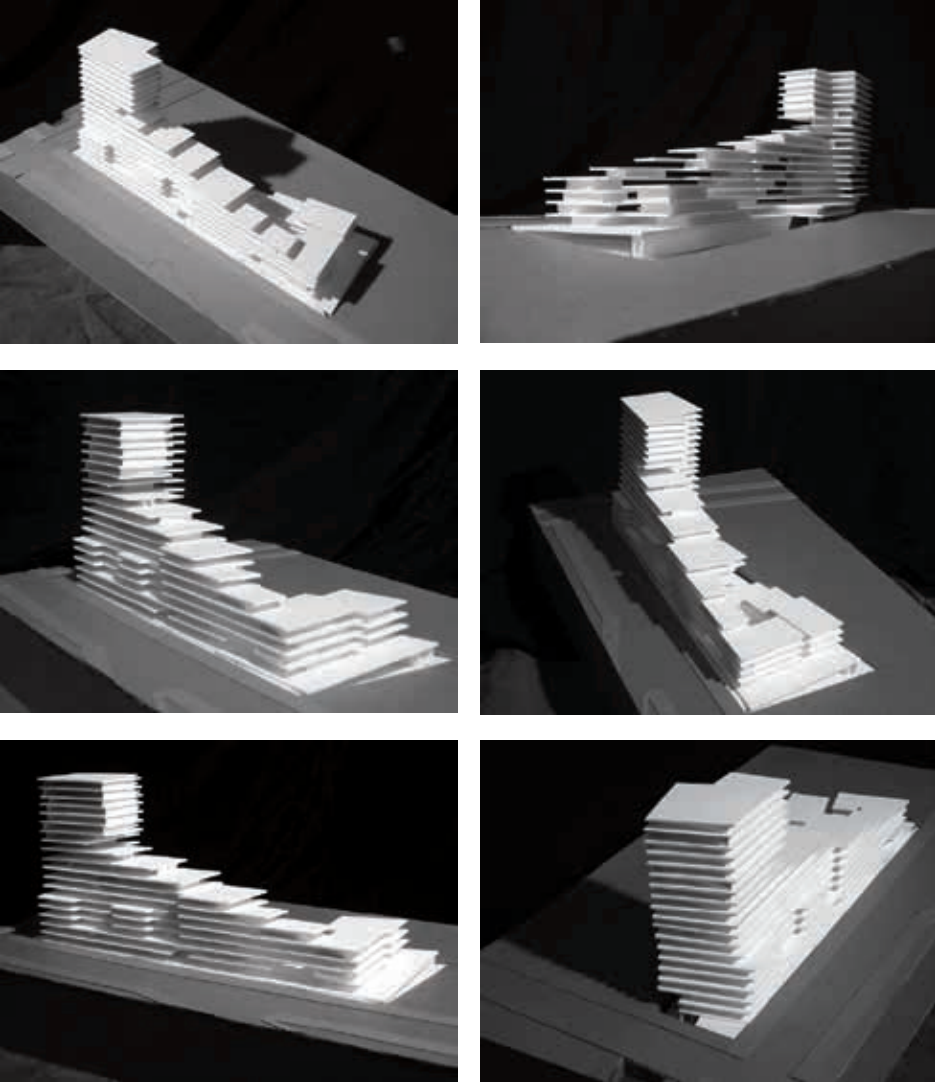


Initial sketches considered the reactivation of the rail tracks as a pedestrian corridor with possible connections above between the high school, our project, and the playing fields.





Sketch model developed to better understand the project's proportion.



This view down Brook Avenue shows the stepping of building parts as well as façade openings and PV sun awnings.

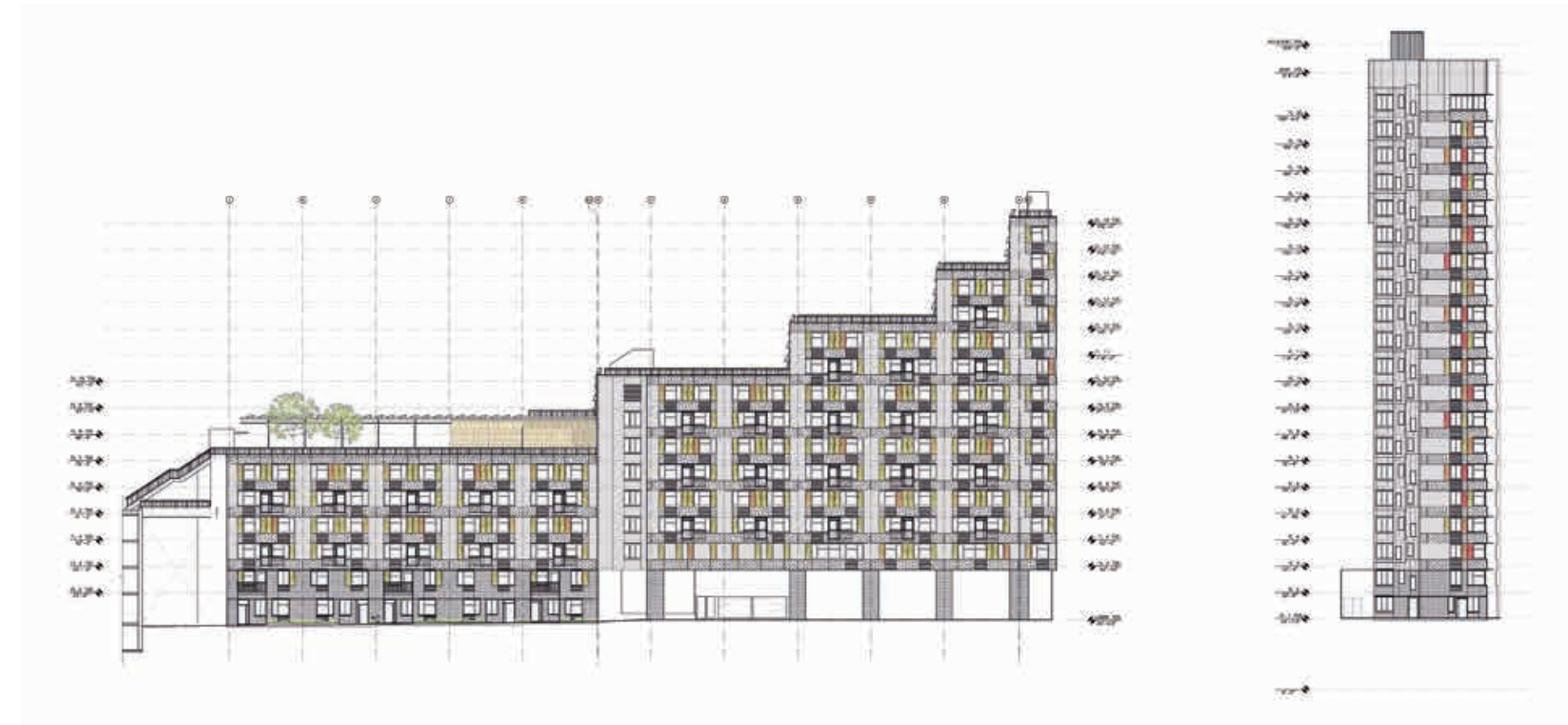


Drawings





West Elevation



East Elevation

South Elevation







Lessons Learned



JURY AND SPONSOR COMMENTS

Lance Jay Brown, FAIA, NHNY Steering Committee founding member, served ex officio as Jury Advisor and Facilitator:

“Rarely, if ever, has a jury (1) had access to the extensive and significant pre-jury analyses prepared by the teams of specialists that evaluated the original 32 submissions and the specifics of the five finalists’ proposals, and (2) represented the level of expertise and broad experience that was brought to bear on this occasion. These two aspects of the process allowed for the extremely high-level discourse and deliberation that resulted in the difficult but well-informed decision.

“The participation of two of New York City’s extraordinary Commissioners, the Bronx Borough President, private developers, a sustainability innovator, a social-science academic, and award-winning designers from both coasts of the country insured that all facets of the project were carefully considered. Perhaps most important was the knowledge that whatever resulted from this effort could effectively and positively influence the way in which future affordable green housing might be delivered in New York and throughout the United States. There not only was opportunity here but also responsibility. The visibility the project has received so far is a testament to the good work done to date.”

M. David Lee, FAIA, Jury Chair:

“I was impressed with the innovative design spirit that flowed throughout all of the 32 designs submitted. It’s an exciting time for New York architecture right now, and this unique collaboration between architects and developers proved that good design isn’t just limited to high-profile institutions or businesses, but is available and even economical for lower-income building throughout the city... These are remarkable and talented teams.”

“In an era in which architectural discourse is often framed around an interest in high-end museums and highly personalized buildings it was refreshing to participate in

what might be characterized as prosaic but certainly no less important: the challenge of creating innovative, affordable housing. Two things about the competition stand out to me. (A) The willingness of the city, most notably HPD, to collaborate with NYSERDA and the AIA New York Chapter to sponsor the competition with the clear understanding that current practices and rules might be challenged. (B) The structuring of the submission requirements based on financing, construction and regulatory parameters that encouraged teaming between young firms, out of town firms, and / or local firms familiar with the city.

“In terms of the winning team, the sheer warmth and humaneness of its presentation materials was not lost on the jury. Hopefully, the successful implementation of the winning scheme will reinforce the importance of the sensitively designed ‘background’ building as a vital component in the building of great neighborhoods and great cities.”

Shaun Donovan Hon, AIA, Commissioner of NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development, Jury member:

“From the very beginning the competition was about trying to bring together design ideas, to push the meaning and the possibilities of design in affordable housing, but to do it in a way that was about impacting the real built environment. This affected the way that we structured the competition, producing a healthy tension between doing something new and different, but doing something that also could be an example and a real beacon for future built projects. Given the incredible response the competition received, and the innovative proposals the jury reviewed, the competition presents a real opportunity to change the future of affordable housing. We hope that PRDG’s proposal will serve as a prototype for future affordable housing developments built nationally and internationally.”

David Burney, FAIA, Commissioner of NYC Department of Design & Construction, Jury member:

“For me, the most exciting result of this competition was the way in which the proposals successfully incorporated various elements into a cohesive urban design.

