

Former NYC Brownfield Now Site of Affordable Housing

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(L to R) Steve Malinowski of CA Rich Consultants, Inc.; Perry Winston of Magnusson Architecture and Planning, PC; Magnus Magnusson of Magnusson Architecture and Planning, PC; Debbie Kenyon of L+M Development Partners; Tell Metzger of L+M Development Partners; and Deborah Shapiro of CA Rich Consultants, Inc.

New York–L+M Development Partners, an affordable and market-rate multi-housing specialist in the New York area, along with partners Melrose Associates and Nos Quedamos, have been awarded the Big Apple Brownfield Affordable Housing Award for the La Terraza development. The prize recognizes excellence in a narrow affordable housing niche, brownfield redevelopment.

Developed by the three partners, the mixed-use, low-income La Terraza rental development is eight stories tall and contains 97 rental units. Located on the eastern edge of the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area, it is the latest development under New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Cornerstone Program.

According to the partners, the focal point of La Terraza is a recessed tower that rises from the corner of Third Avenue and East 158th Street, thus mimicking existing buildings across the street and serving to anchor the building on the block. Large glass canopies delineate residential and retail entries.

The trickiest aspect of the development was the brownfield mitigation. L+M construction, environmental engineer CA Rich Consultants Inc., and Magnusson Architecture and Planning PC collaborated to balance the project's exacting mitigation specifications, including the vapor-extraction system and groundwater sampling wells, with the sub-grade building systems, while also maintaining the area and clearances necessary to accomplish the building program.

Yet the design elements that mitigate the brownfield conditions are essentially invisible, say the developers. More prominent are features such as large glass windows, balconies, varying tones of masonry, special interior finishes and a fully landscaped courtyard at the ground floor that provides outdoor space for residents.

Besides being a brownfield site, the development has other green features as well. “Even though La Terraza is not going to obtain LEED certification, it will comply with NYSERDA [New York State Energy Research and Development Authority] Energy Star requirements and has a number of sustainable features,” a spokeswoman for Magnusson Architecture and Planning tells *MHN*.

These features include extra-thick pipe insulation, high-efficiency fans on all mechanical ventilation systems, high-efficiency pump on the space heating system, and dual-level lighting in common spaces (hallways, parking garage, recycling room), the spokeswoman continues. Also, the development makes use of PVC-free resilient flooring, an air barrier on the exterior envelope (including at window openings), air sealing at all pipe penetrations, Energy Star kitchen appliances and laundry equipment, double-glazed windows, low-flow residential plumbing fixtures and low-VOC paints.

