

Housing AWARD

Architect: Magnusson Architecture & Planning

Project: Melrose Commons

Location: Bronx, NY

Client: Nos Quedamos; L&M Equity Participants; Procida Realty & Construction; Melrose Associates; Phipps House

"We Stay/Nos Quedamos" was the rallying cry of nearly 6,000 residents of the Melrose section of the South Bronx (with a median annual income of \$12,000) when a 63-block urban renewal plan was proposed in the late 1980s. Fearing displacement, and wanting a say in the future of their community, residents and business owners formed the Nos Quedamos Committee. The architectural and planning firm began working for Nos Quedamos *pro bono* to craft what became the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan, shaped by committee input and signed into law in 1994.

Six Melrose Commons projects are currently under construction, with six more scheduled to begin in 2006. Projects serve a variety of

clients, from the homeless to homeowners, and range from town houses to towers. The Melrose Commons Cornerstone project consists of six developments over a four-block area. This new generation of buildings will add 400 units of housing, and more than 100,000 square feet of commercial space and community facilities to the neighborhood. The buildings' designs follow the tradition of strong bases with lively retail uses on the streets, and a middle masonry ground that is topped by stronger expression of the upper floors.

"The plan that has been developed is informed by the cultural and historic perspective that the community brings to it, while at the same time, allowing for change as this community evolves over time. The architecture attempts to bring together a traditional residential form with gestures of respect to the cultural context of the community."

Petr Stand, APA, Architect

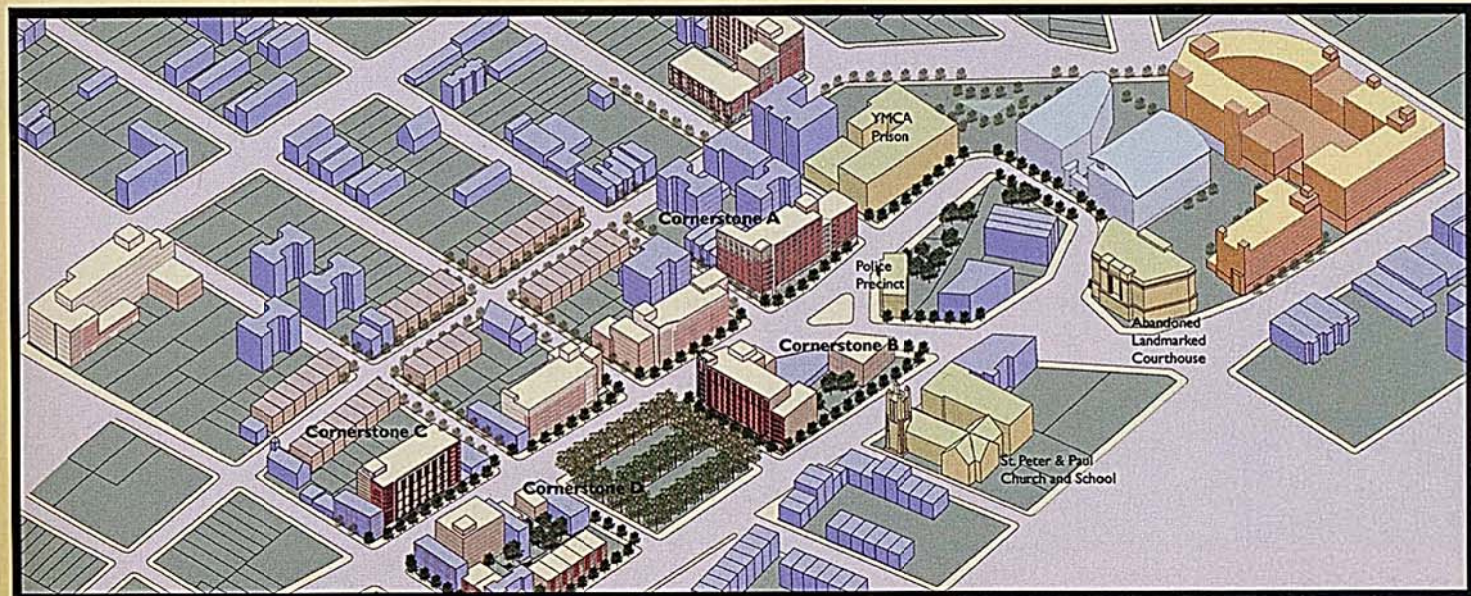
"What is really interesting is the process of engagement with the community, the strategy for new sites and development, the kind of standards and vocabulary established, rather than the individual buildings. As architects, we always think of the finished product, but sometimes it's actually the strategy for making it that's more important."

Jury

Magnusson Architecture & Planning Project Team: Magnus Magnusson AIA (Principal-in-Charge), Petr Stand, APA (Principal in-Charge/Planning), Joseph Lengeling, AIA (Principal in-Charge/Design), Sung Kim (Project Designer/Planner), Christine Hunter, AIA (Senior Project Architect/Manager), Vandani Mehta, Omalawa Abdullah-Musa, Oswaldo Orozco, Roberta Fennessy (Planner)
Builder: Procida Construction / L&M Building
Structural Engineer: Goldstein Associates
MEP Engineer: Simon Rodkin PC



Above: Larger Cornerstone buildings will include street-level retail and articulated corners to enliven intersections and mark entries Below: The Cornerstone project consists of six developments over a four-block area



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