

MULTI-HOUSING NEWS

THE NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCE FOR THE MULTI-HOUSING PROFESSIONAL

JANUARY 2006

Is That a Condo?

As Inclusionary Design Catches On, the Distinctions Between Affordable, Market-Rate and Luxury Multifamily are Becoming Blurred

By Diana Mosher
Editor-in-Chief

Perhaps the highest compliment you can pay an affordable housing developer or architect is to mistake their work for a market-rate multifamily property. "We're seeing more mixed-income building in New York City. Low-, middle-, and high-income--we're looking at projects that straddle the market," says Magnus Magnusson, principal-in-charge at **Magnusson Architecture and Planning, PC (MAP)** in New York.

According to Petr Stand, a principal at MAP, New York City is at the forefront of mixed-income development. Inclusionary zoning has been mandated during the administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, and is being driven by the NYC Department of City

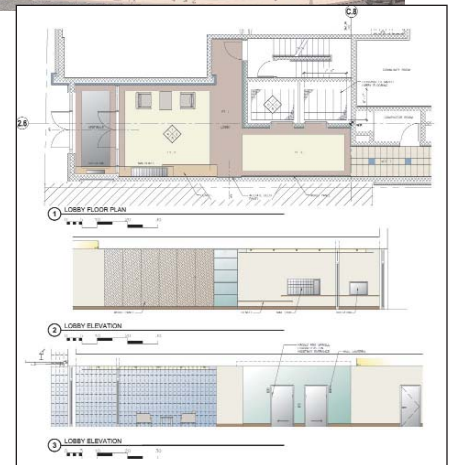
Planning. Community Development Corporations have been advocating for this as well. "It's a national story that other cities will be watching," Stand believes.

MAP has been active in New York City's South Bronx since the 1980s. When plans were being made to rebuild multifamily housing on the area's numerous rubble sites, community groups insisted that a mix of housing to accommodate high- and middle-income groups would be most beneficial over the long term.

"We were always sensitive to that," says Magnusson. In fact, the firm's early housing efforts received remarks like "Boy they're building condos in the South Bronx." Eventually, MAP did collaborate with **Nos Quedamos/We Stay**, **Procida**, **Melrose Associates** and **L&M Equity Participants** on the first elevator condo building in the South Bronx, slated to break ground this month and scheduled for com-



The Orion [above, right] will be the South Bronx's first elevator Condo.



pletion in 2007. The Orion, a 61-unit condominium, will be located at 3044 Third Avenue. "Everyone will be watching sales very closely, because many other projects will follow quickly if this project is successful." The plan is to be sold out by June 2006. The property will offer both affordable (25 percent) middle-income (50 percent) and market-rate (25 percent) units.

MAP recently completed Palacio del Sol ("Palace of the Sun"), a 124-unit mixed-use, affordable housing project in the Melrose Comomns section of the Bronx for developers **Nos Quedamos/We Stay** and **L&M Equity Participants**.



Palacio del Sol is a mixed-use apartment building in NYC for tenants earning up to 60% of the Area Median Income.

Palacio del Sol is located on Melrose Avenue between 156th and

157th Streets. Rents will accommodate tenants earning up to 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI).

With its distinctive lobby and spacious community room, the building represents a departure in affordable housing design. Palacio's laundry room has direct access to a private outdoor space and a view of the children's play area.

On-site parking is provided for 47 cars. The property also has tree-lined sidewalks and lawn space, which provide both privacy and a buffer from street and traffic noise. "We chose the three colors of brick for the...facade to harmonize with the

existing palette of the diverse neighborhood," adds Magnusson. "This variety helps to break up the massing, which keeps the building--one of the largest in the area--from becoming overwhelming."

Palacio del Sol's dramatic corner entry, capped with a lively sunburst design, is its most notable architectural feature and was designed in close collaboration with the late Yolanda Garcia, founder of Nos Quedamos, a neighborhood advocacy group whose efforts helped to establish Melrose Commons as an urban renewal area in the early 1990s. The recessed entry to the building creates a small piazza on the corner, which encourages residents and visitors alike to participate more fully in the community's street life.

In addition to its residential component, the building contains 13,035 square feet of commercial space, which will be used for a supermarket--a unique feature in a neighborhood populated with smaller markets. The property will also house a new 2,650-sq.-ft. headquarters for Nos Quedamos.

