



Brooklyn SPACE

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OCEAN HILL — The application process for the Vernon Cherry Homes on Eastern Parkway and Thomas Boyland Avenue in Ocean Hill turned out to be easy. There were 500 people in the lottery waiting to purchase one of the 71 townhome units.

And the development, not yet completed, is already one-third occupied.

Its success probably had something to do with the fact that the developer, Loewen Development, based in Larchmont, N.Y., is known for its award-winning residential projects.

The firm, along with designer Danois Architects and builder L&M Equity Partnership, were honored last summer with Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Building Brooklyn 2004

Awards for a similar project in Crown Heights now known as Pacific Gardens.

The 71 new homes of the Vernon Cherry project are all three-story and consist of a three-bedroom owner's unit and two rental units (213 units total), according to Peter Murray, Loewen vice president and a partner in the firm.

According to a project description from the designer, MAP Architects, "all buildings face the street with no more than a five- to ten-foot setback (for grade level unit privacy), allowing a closer 'eyes-on-the-street' relationship." All on-site parking is at the rear of the buildings, optimizing the street relationship of the buildings, minimizing the amount of curb cuts, supporting street parking and reinforcing street activity and presence.

The typical family earns between \$40,000 and \$50,000, according to Murray.

"So our applicants are teachers, parole officers and firefighters," he said. In fact, applicants had to meet three criteria, according to Murray — their combined household income could not exceed \$75,000; they had to be first-time homebuyers; and they must be able to qualify for a mortgage. Loewen had partnered with the City and with the not-for-profit Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Co. in Ocean Hill, which is handling the mar-

keting and sales.

The homes are selling for an average of \$290,000. However, that does not mean the firm has skimped on quality.

"The brick façade buildings with round bay windows and detailed cornice work are characteristic of classic Brooklyn townhouse design," said Magnus Magnusson of MAP Architects.

The project pays tribute to Vernon Cherry, a member of the Brooklyn Fire Department who was killed in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center.

"When we were in the process of planning and designing the project, I read his story and thought it would be nice to name it after him," said Murray, who then consulted with City Council Member Tracy Boyland and contacted the family for permission.

Loewen Development has completed four previous affordable residential projects in Brooklyn, in addition to the Vernon Cherry Homes and the 39-home Pacific Gardens — Maple Gardens in Brownsville, a 45-home development; Knickerbocker Village in Bushwick, a 40-home development; and two gut rehabs in Canarsie and Bedford-Stuyvesant, both 72-unit rental apartment buildings.

A groundbreaking will take place soon, Murray said, for a Prospect Place Hope VI project, a 138-unit rental apartment building in Brownsville.



The Vernon Cherry Homes in Ocean Hill as pictured in the architect's rendering, above, and as it looked recently, below and left. Rendering and photos courtesy of MAP Architects and Loewen Development