

Fellows Proceedings

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Affordable Housing: Development & Design

May 17, 2007

Program in cooperation with:
Environmental Psychology Program
CUNY
The City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Institute for Urban Design

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Affordable Housing: Ideas and Issues

Ann Ferebee
Founding Director
Institute for Urban Design

Historically the godchild of public agencies, affordable housing, whether funded by HUD in Washington or by state and local agencies, has been diminished by two decades of decline in public financing.

But with available open space in cities shrinking, the ability to provide privately financed housing for low- and moderate-income families has faltered. New financing approaches are now succeeding from new public sector sources. The three case studies at the core of our May 2007 workshop demonstrate innovations in financing. A second session addressed design issues in Norfolk, Virginia, in New Orleans, and in the Bronx, New York.

- Norfolk, Virginia, with one of the first HUD-financed housing programs in the country, is now focusing on the \$700 million St. Paul's Quadrant to provide 1,000 units of low- and moderate-income housing together with market-rate housing, retail and offices. David Dixon of Boston-based Goody Clancy reports that a proposed new street grid and parks will enhance the neighborhood. Mayor Paul Fraim is working to see that upgraded St. Paul's Quadrant meshes with the now-thriving Granby Street downtown to reinforce it as regional magnet for living, dining and working.
- New Orleans, with a new plan announced by recovery chief Edward Blakely, focuses on rebuilding, redeveloping, and renewing 17 locations. With Enterprise Homes' investment of some \$5 million to build affordable housing in New Orleans, more federal low-income tax credit has been made available and more families should be able to buy their own homes. According to Christine Madigan, senior vice president of Enterprise Homes, low-income tax credits are expected to be key to the success of affordable housing not only in New Orleans, but also in New York.
- New York's \$7.5 billion plan to build or preserve 165,000 units of low- and moderate-cost housing now makes it a laboratory of non-profit financing under the leadership of Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Via Verde, an affordable housing project on a 47,000-square-foot site in the Melrose section of the South Bronx, is an outgrowth of the New Housing New York legacy partnership (NHNY), which initiated a two-stage juried competition to select an architect-developer team. Lance Jay Brown served on the committee that saw Via Verde through the competition process.

Affordable Housing for the Postindustrial Era

Lance Jay Brown
ACSA Distinguished Professor
City College of New York
School of Architecture

From the worker housing on the site of Egypt's ancient pyramids to the blue-collar row housing in American cities from Boston to Houston, there has always been a need for affordable housing. Each era had individuals and governments that sought a way to serve the needs of its low-income population. Today, the critical issue is how to provide housing for a broader spectrum of our working population. The issue raises a number of questions, including:

- Does society consider affordable housing a right or a privilege?
- Who is responsible for providing this housing?
- What responsibility does the government have?
- What is the role of the private sector or the non-profit sector?
- What are the responsibilities of designers in meeting today's affordable housing challenge?

We are all aware of the decline in the production of affordable housing in the United States since the 1970s. Federally funded programs for housing were either underfunded or discontinued, leaving states and cities searching for mechanisms to house their low-income populations and, as housing costs continued to rise, their middle class as well. The means and responsibility for rectifying our nation's housing needs are constantly debated. Circumstances have pitted social activists against one another, as seen in the Atlantic Yards project in downtown Brooklyn. And a recent affordable housing study by the Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute (Baruch College, CUNY) concluded with a chapter titled "Who Is Responsible?: Two Views," in which Peter Salins and James Stockard argue, respectively "New York City's Permanent Housing Crisis: Can Government End It?" vs. "The Affordable Housing Imperative for Americas Cities: Can government Solve It?"

One definition of affordable housing is a dwelling where the total housing costs are affordable to those living in that housing unit. In the United States and Canada, a commonly accepted guideline for housing affordability is a housing cost that does not exceed 30 percent of a household's gross income. According to others, including Michael Kwartler, affordable means housing to 100 percent of middle income and down. A third definition, and one agreed upon by the May 17 Fellows Panel, was given by Catlin Rockman, a mid-career painter in Boston: "First, it is housing that has access to transportation, markets, and community services. It needs a sustainable location. Second, costs can be born by those between poverty and the middle class. Third, it should cost no more than 25 percent of net income. Fourth, the type and term of mortgages should be considered.

Fifth, the residential space, itself, should be sustainable and the location happy, not desolate. Last, there should be a tenant's organization with agreed upon comfortable house rules."

The May 17 Institute Program on Affordable Housing had two sessions. The first dealt with affordable housing finance mechanisms, and the second focused on actual designs for soon-to-be-built affordable housing. The case studies that follow look at economics, sustainability, and design excellence.

Affordable Housing:

devel-
opment
work-
shop

David Dixon

Partner
Goody Clancy
& Associates
Boston
New Values in
Affordable Housing

Some 2,000 units are required within 10 minutes of downtown to make retail development economically viable.



In the late 1990s, demographic, social, and other forces converged in a manner that has altered the traditional American dream of a house in the suburbs. We now have the opportunity and challenge to guide the first real national urban renaissance since before the Great Depression. After decades of relative decline, urban cores have begun to rise in value in real dollar terms compared to other parts of their regions. Several changes, each bringing significant new opportunities and challenges, are driving this trend:

1 Changes in demographics

Since the late-1990s there has been no single group dominating the housing market. The Urban Land Institute has noted that the lack of a mass market is creating a “nation of niches,” meaning 21st-century neighborhoods need to accommodate and celebrate previously unimagined diversity. Demographic changes have led to a much more favorable urban housing market with the price of condominiums climbing higher than that of single-family homes for the first time (*Wall Street Journal*).

2 Changes in societal values that impact choices we make in how and where we live

Congestion, worsening significantly since the late-1990s, has resulted in a willingness to pay a significant premium to rent office/retail/living space that is in mixed-use, walkable environments—not just in downtowns but in suburban areas. A Brookings Institute study also indicates the mixed-use environment premium to be 30 to 40 percent. The reality is that we have as much large-lot suburban housing and only about half as much small-lot urban housing now as we will need in 2030.

3 Changes in attitudes and awareness of public health and environmental issues

Personal choices are being made with a greater interest in sustainability. Responsibility is shifting from the public to personal arena as people begin to be conscious of their own choices and are increasingly making those choices with more than just personal implications in mind. The Sierra Club notes that people who choose to live in dense urban areas require significantly less land (1,000 urban residences typically cover only 3 percent as much land as 1,000 single family dwellings) and building material than those in single-family dwellings, and they use much less heating and cooling energy and water.

Reintroducing density as a positive value in planning for growth and change is central to translating these trends into tangible building blocks for more livable communities. In the years following World War II, the term “density” came to be popularly associated with quality-of-life issues such



New mixed income housing proposal to replace the Cabrini Green public housing development in Chicago; rising housing values enable market rate housing to subsidize much of the affordable and low income housing.

Opposite: Single and two-family houses provide extra density with appealing small scale.

as crowding, traffic congestion, and concentrated poverty, largely as a result of overcrowded slums described by the press during the early 20th century. In recent years, however, a reexamination of attitudes toward density has been seen as an essential step in fighting sprawl and enhancing the quality of life and economic opportunity for large and small communities.

Density cannot and should not be imposed: We need to engage in a new era of community education. In addition to providing better design models, we need to talk about environmental and social issues. For example, nothing strikes a deeper, or more telling chord in public meetings than the desire for a nearby walkable Main Street. Goody Clancy undertook a study a few years ago with Pam McKinney, a nationally respected real-estate economist, to determine how many new housing units are required to support a single block of new Main Street retail. The answer turned out to be 1,000 to 2,000 units within a 10- to 15-minute walk. American cities did not require such densities when urban neighborhoods were first built, because earlier generations of residents spent a much greater share of disposable income at local stores.

Tax increment financing can be of great value in the urban housing market. Funds that are raised can be used to insure mortgages or to help people feel comfortable investing in higher-risk mixed-income neighborhoods. Internal subsidy helps subsidize low- and moderate-income housing instead of paying for land. For rebuilding public housing this technique works when the public sector owns the land and is willing to write the cost down and partially subsidize development of parks and infrastructure. Additional funding can come from new market tax credits to underwrite not only the cost of developing commercial space, but also parks and other neighborhood elements.



Christine Madigan

Senior Vice President for Development Enterprise Homes Baltimore, MD Low-Income Tax Credit for Affordable Housing in New Orleans

A 19th century vocabulary of style will be used for proposed new single- and two-family housing.

Affordable housing financing brings together many public and private funding sources. Some projects require a half dozen different funding sources and others may require as many as twelve. Enterprise Homes' development project in New Orleans is a useful case study of affordable housing financing. Together with our partner, Providence Community Housing, Enterprise is redeveloping the Lafitte public housing site in New Orleans and surrounding Treme and Tulane/Gravier communities.

Providence Community Housing and Enterprise Community Partners were selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) to help plan a new community on and around the site of the Lafitte public housing development, a 27.5-acre parcel in the historic Treme/Lafitte neighborhood of New Orleans. Lafitte was built in 1941 and consists of 896 units.

Providence and Enterprise conditioned our participation in this effort on three critical development principles:

- 1 absolute opportunity for the 865 families and individuals who lived in the Lafitte development before Katrina to return to better quality homes and a healthier neighborhood;
- 2 900 subsidized homes, the same number as in the Lafitte development before the storm, integrated in mixed-income communities on and around the site;
- 3 resident participation in planning and developing a more vibrant community.

Through a series of planning charrettes in New Orleans last fall, meetings with Lafitte residents living in other cities, and ongoing monthly planning meetings, Providence and Enterprise have collaborated with residents to create a development plan for the community. Participants in those sessions and through surveys told us many things that have guided us as we have developed ideas for the Treme/Lafitte & Tulane/Gravier Homebuilding Plan. Some of the key ideas of the plan include:

- **Bring People Home as Quickly as Possible**
The Lafitte site provides the opportunity to build a substantial amount of new housing that can serve as the focus of a community-wide revitalization. The plan provides recommendations for additional off-site acquisitions to be sure that the building of homes will also be building the neighborhood. Efforts are underway to begin construction as early as possible, particularly the off-site homes.
- **Building Homes To Build a Neighborhood**
Residents spoke about the importance of community and neighbors in the lives of their families. There was a strong preference for houses and smaller buildings rather than larger buildings. As a result, the building types called for in the plan are single- and two-family homes, with small apartment buildings, including one for seniors. Homes should be placed to create safe streets and public spaces so that, as you walk down the street or through a common green, you know that people who know you are around and watching out for you.

- **Trees and Village Places**
When describing the best qualities of the area 20 years ago, participants spoke about the common greens on the Lafitte site. The gardens and yards around the trees were places for people to interact. People also spoke about the qualities that created a village atmosphere. The proposed plan builds on these elements by creating a series of greens surrounded by homes with porches and stoops. They are open to small-scale streets that connect with streets in the Treme and Tulane/Gravier neighborhoods.
- **Culture, Children and History**
Residents spoke about the importance of facilities for children, including recreation and after-school programs. They also described the need for continuing education for adults, parent-training programs, job training and employment counseling, and for other programs that could engage senior citizens in the education of the young. This plan includes spaces in several locations to provide such services.
- **Education, Children and the Neighborhoods**
Residents spoke of their hopes for the next generation, as well as of their worries about the current quality of education. The plan recommends building new housing in the areas around schools to better integrate education into the daily life of the neighborhood. The plan calls for a coordinated effort to build new houses both around schools and along the routes between schools through the neighborhood.



- **Services and Stores in the Neighborhood**

Residents spoke of stores and services in the neighborhood that could be walked to easily, and that could be a place for meeting neighbors and contributing to a stronger sense of community. The plan includes senior apartments and mixed-use buildings with residential units on upper floors and ground-floor spaces that can be used for services and shops.

- **Housing Choices**

Residents spoke of the need for choices and different kinds of housing for people with different needs. They expressed preferences for front- and backyards. The plan provides a variety of house types: single-family houses, duplexes, and apartments. A diverse collection of house and building types, as well as architectural character, will be available for both the Lafitte site and the infill housing program throughout the neighborhood. In the planning charrettes, residents evaluated a large number of different building designs. Their preferences determined the housing choices that are now part of the Homebuilding Plan.

- **Affordable Housing Finance**

The primary source of financing for the Homebuilding Plan in New Orleans is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program. The LIHTC Program is the largest source of affordable housing funding in the country. Started in 1986, this program now results in financing for approximately 99,000 affordable rental units across the country each year. The following overview of the program is provided by Enterprise Community Investment.

- **Housing Subsidy Program**

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit is a housing subsidy program for rental housing created within Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.



- **Administered by State Housing Finance Agencies**

Each state receives a formula-based amount of low-income housing tax credits each year to allocate to qualified residential housing projects. This is a per capita calculation of 1.75 per person adjusted for inflation beginning in 2003. The program is administered by each state's housing finance agency (HFA). A few local jurisdictions are delegated authority by their states to grant credits to projects. Tax credit awards are made pursuant to a Qualified Allocation Plan established by the state or local agency.

- **Based on Tenant Eligibility**

Tax credits are available only for rental units whose tenants have incomes at or below certain threshold income limits—either 60 percent or 50 percent of local area median. In awarding tax credits to projects, states often give preference to income limits below the 60 percent and 50 percent thresholds, and to projects serving special needs or other priority tenant populations. An additional 30 percent incentive exists for projects in high-cost or difficult-to-develop areas, which are typically those with the highest development cost and the lowest rents.

- **Investor Benefits**

Investors in tax credit projects earn dollar-for-dollar credits against their federal income tax liability. They also receive tax benefits from the tax losses generated primarily by depreciation and amortization, and in some cases, from cash flow and sales proceeds.

- **Credits for 10 Years**

Generally, tax credits are taken over the first ten years of a project's operating period. In certain cases, the credits must be taken over 15 years.

- **Fifteen-Year Initial Compliance Period**

The tax credit program requires a 15-year tax-credit compliance period for each project, plus an additional 15-year period during which time the affordability restrictions remain. To be more competitive in obtaining tax credits, some projects commit to a longer compliance period, such as 40 or 50 years.

LIHTC equity typically provides two-thirds of the capital costs required to develop affordable housing. The balance is funded by a variety of sources including Federal Home and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding administered through local jurisdictions, and local sources such as affordable housing trust funds, which many cities and states have formed to help fill financing gaps. Occasionally, gap financing includes private funds such as grants from foundations.

Affordable Housing Finance in the Gulf Region

Following Hurricane Katrina, Congress substantially increased the funding available to support affordable housing in the Gulf region. In Louisiana, the allocation of GO Zone (Gulf Opportunity Zone) tax credits increased the state's annual LIHTC's from \$8 million annually pre-Katrina to \$60 million (a three-year allocation of \$179 million). These Louisiana GO Zone tax credits are expected to generate approximately \$1.6 billion in LIHTC equity (depending on investor pricing) to help rebuild affordable housing in the region. In addition, Congress increased its CDBG allocation in the GO Zone, and the Louisiana Recovery Authority set aside \$667 million of this allocation for rental housing development. Both the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) established funding criteria that emphasized development of mixed-income communities. This was defined as providing new housing comprised of at least 30 percent market rate units integrated with the affordable units.

Consistent with our key principles, Providence Community Housing and Enterprise Homes worked with residents to develop a plan that provides 900 units of affordable housing to replace the Lafitte public housing units, including homes for families and senior citizens, and 600 homeownership units. This mix of rental and homeownership units meets the LHFA and LRA mixed-income funding criteria (70 percent rental, 30 percent homeownership) and more importantly is designed to foster a healthier, more sustainable community.



Achieving financing closing represents a big portion of the work in developing any affordable housing community. The financing process includes developing a plan, structuring the financing, applying for funds from multiple sources, coordinating or layering these sources, and negotiating financing documents, and partnership agreements.

The behind-the-scenes financing effort is what makes neighborhood transformation and affordable-housing development possible. Complex and demanding as it is, when an affordable housing community is built, comes to life with residents, and helps transform a neighborhood, the results are always worth the effort.

Opposite: Proposed new housing for Lafitte and surrounding neighborhood will be funded by tax credits now increased from a pool of \$8 million to a pool of \$60 million. Lafitte plan calls for single-family, two-family housing together with small-scale apartments and a building for seniors.

Left: Some 1950s public housing will be replaced by smaller publicly-funded apartment buildings.

Affordable Housing:

design case studies

David Dixon

Partner
Goody Clancy
& Associates
Boston

Sustainable Urbanism: St. Paul's Quadrant, Norfolk, VA

The St. Paul's Quadrant planning study addresses the vast redevelopment potential of a 115-acre district next to Norfolk's downtown, which has a healthy combination of office, residential, retail, and entertainment, demonstrating the success of three decades of thoughtful redevelopment. The quadrant offers tremendous opportunity to create a significant mixed-use neighborhood with more than 2,000 units of mixed-income housing and more than 500,000 square feet of retail and/or office uses, while accommodating historic churches and businesses. Redevelopment goals include providing new homes in the neighborhood, replacing all 618 units of an existing 50-year old public housing project on site, and complementing the public housing with market-rate and workforce housing serving diverse income levels, household types and lifestyles, responding to and reinforcing the strong trend of interest in housing in downtown Norfolk. Comprehensive social services are also being planned for the public housing residents as part of an ongoing survey of resident needs.

Key site attributes include proximity to significant downtown jobs, retail, and entertainment venues, including the SCOPE arena and Harbor Park minor league baseball stadium, four landmark church buildings, excellent waterfront and downtown views, and a future light rail line that is in advanced stages of planning and approvals. Challenges include the need for pedestrian-friendly connections across the arterial streets separating the quadrant from downtown, chronic flooding due to low elevations, phasing housing construction to minimize disruption to public housing residents, and minimizing the visual and noise impacts of an adjacent highway to the south.

Core redevelopment principles include creating a vibrant community with a diversity of residents and uses; establishing a network of strong street connections within and beyond the district with emphasis on the pedestrian realm and transit access; and creation of a rich hierarchy of signature outdoor public spaces, including retail/entertainment plazas, serene parks historic churches, attractive ponds doubling as water-retention infrastructure, and recreational links to the waterfront. The planning process includes a series of public meetings, a full-day design charrette, periodic newsletters and project website to foster dialogue among residents, city leaders and other stakeholders. Key to implementation is the fact that the project enjoys strong political support for creating a new mixed-income downtown neighborhood.

Area and program summary

St Paul's Quadrant study area:

- Overall district area approximately 115 acres
- Includes the Tidewater Gardens public housing development (Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority), which encompasses approximately 43 acres and 618 public housing units, all occupied.
- Includes Downtown Plaza, a defunct 13-acre strip shopping center strategically purchased by the city to facilitate planned redevelopment.



- Includes a U.S. Postal Service mail sorting facility on a 15.9-acre site. This may become available for redevelopment in the long term.
- Includes five active church congregations, four of which have architecturally and historically significant buildings.
- Up to 400,000 square feet of retail space, including both neighborhood-serving retail and regional-serving retail, integrated with housing and parking in mixed-use structures.
- 250,000 to 1,000,000 square feet of office space.
- Other existing uses in the area including five churches, an elementary school, fire station, and several office buildings are assumed to remain, with potential for much enhanced settings.
- Redevelopment is planned to be feasible with the existing USPS facility remaining, but with significant additional opportunities should its relocation be possible.

Anticipated program:

- Roughly 2,300 housing units including the 618 public housing units now on site, accommodating Tidewater Gardens residents wishing to remain.
- Sufficient number of units with yards to serve families with young children.
- At least three-quarters of the units would be market rate and workforce units targeted to a range of income levels.

Opposite, top: Freemason Street connects to St. Paul's Quadrant where some 2,000 units of mixed-income housing will be blended with more than 500,000 square feet of retail and office buildings.

Opposite, bottom: Planned outdoor spaces include paths for biking and walking and may include ponds doubling as water-retention infrastructure to alleviate flooding.

Right: St. Paul's Quadrant plan envisions connections beyond the district with emphasis on pedestrian realm and transit access.



Brian Phillips

Principal
Interface Studio
Architects
Philadelphia

An Affordable Green Approach: Sheridan Street Housing, Philadelphia, PA

The project was initiated as an AIA Philadelphia Community Design Collaborative project. The Community Design Collaborative is a volunteer organization that offers preliminary design assistance to nonprofit groups. The Collaborative meets with nonprofits at the beginning of a project, develops a scope of services to fit their needs, and recruits design professionals to provide the services pro bono.

This particular initiative, The Affordable Housing Design Challenge, was focused on generating innovative design ideas to affordable housing challenges. Our charge was to design 13 units of affordable, environmentally sustainable housing working with our client, Asociacion de Puertorriquenos en Marcha (APM), which has developed over 200 housing units over the past decade and was looking to diversify its development offerings as the neighborhood, on the fringes of Temple University and a re-emergent North Philadelphia residential market. With the City of Philadelphia, APM will make the units available to both low- to moderate-income persons and homebuyers at or below 115 percent of median income. All homes will be targeted to households from 60 to 115 percent of median income. Sales prices for the 13 units will be set at about \$135,000.



Sheridan Street housing is making 13 units available to low- and moderate-income families at approximately \$135,000 per unit. The three-story homes arrive on the back of a tractor trailer. Because of reduced cost of assembly, some \$20,000 can be earmarked to make each unit more energy efficient.

Opposite:
Each unit has a terrace and yard space.



An Affordable Green Approach

A guiding design goal was to create affordable and efficient buildings so that savings may be applied to green technology elements that help reduce monthly energy bills for homeowners. We undertook research to define the most effective combination of green technologies. The criteria for selection were always to emphasize energy bill reduction.

The buildings are designed to be pre-fabricated by a modular home manufacturer. The straightforward rectangular plans (16-by-35 feet) allow each floor of the three-story homes to arrive on the back of a tractor trailer. We anticipate the cost of this construction method to be about 10 percent less than field building. This savings yields about \$20,000 to put back into making the buildings more energy efficient.

The Site

The 16,000-square-foot site presented difficult challenges as it has no primary street frontage. Sheridan Street functions as a generous alley, with highly constrained overall dimensions at 450 feet in length and 38 feet in depth. Historically the site was occupied by narrow townhouses. We laid out 13 units in an alternating L-shaped configuration to manage buildings, open space, and off-street parking (a requirement for Commonwealth of Pennsylvania funding).

This interlocking geometry allows building facades to hold the streetwall for nearly 50 percent of the perimeter while still allowing for off-street parking curb cuts. We ganged the parking pads into groups of three to minimize the impact of curb cuts. Pervious paving and flat curbs will help to blend the trafficscape into the sidewalk pedestrian zone. We imagine Sheridan Street becoming a sort of parking garden as it serves vehicular access needs along both sides of the street.

The Buildings

Each unit has a terrace, an outdoor yard space, and an off-street parking space. Each of the 12 three-story houses is 1,340 square feet and includes three bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, an outdoor third-floor terrace, and a small office nook adjacent to the master bedroom. One accessible unit is 1450 square feet and has a fully accessible full bath and two bedrooms on the first floor, with an additional full bath and two bedrooms on the second floor for guests or children.

Considering the architectural limitations of the modular construction process and the overall project budget we attempted to derive the design character of the homes from these constraints. A major visual component of the project is the fenestration pattern. Our process involved finding preferred locations for windows by diagramming internal program (editing out stairs, mechanical systems, other places where windows are not desired), sill heights,

and extent of glass related to orientation. We worked with two window sizes—one that fits within one stud space and another that fits between two (which meets legal egress requirements). Egress requirements were another criteria used for window placement. The windows are shaded on the exterior with horizontal projects on the south side and vertical fins on the west. The seemingly eccentric window layout, in combination with the shading devices, give the buildings their visual identity.

The green components of the buildings include:

- Modular construction. Factory-based construction tends to save materials and ensure that scrap material is recycled.
- Solar energy. Solar hot water panel mounted above the terrace cuts energy costs by using the sun to heat domestic hot water needs. The panel provides shading to the terrace and becomes a very strong visual element.
- Cool roof. A white membrane roof reflects heat during the summer months. Testing in Philadelphia has shown the difference in temperature between dark and light colored roofs to be up to 60 degrees during August.
- LEED for Homes Rating. The buildings will be constructed to meet the LEED standard for homes, ensuring good insulation, efficient HVAC systems, minimizing air infiltration, and the use of local and recycled materials among other elements.
- Lifestyle Elements. A whole house switch located near the front door will allow the homeowner to bring the house down to a low energy setting when leaving, which will prevent, for example, upstairs lights and air conditioning, from being left on when the house is empty. A digital electric meter will be mounted in a prominent location on the first floor so that homeowners become more aware of how much energy their home is consuming.



Paul Freitag

Director of Development
Jonathan Rose
Companies

An Integrated Approach to Green Design: David and Joyce Dinkins Gardens, Bronx, NY

The development of green affordable housing may seem like a heroic task given the assumption that green is more costly and that affordable housing projects, by definition, have impossibly tight budgets. But technological innovation and a holistic approach to development demonstrate that green need not cost more. In partnership with a range of nonprofit organizations, Jonathan Rose Companies currently has in development hundreds of units of affordable green housing including renovations and additions to historic buildings providing supportive housing, new construction of affordable housing that includes social service centers, and mixed-income residential buildings providing both market-rate and affordable apartments. In all of these projects, Jonathan Rose Companies has developed specific techniques to green the projects without significantly impacting the budget and, in some cases, with no increase at all in comparison to conventional affordable housing.

Building on its experience in both green development and affordable housing, Jonathan Rose Companies undertook the development of David and Joyce Dinkins Gardens, an 85-unit affordable housing residence located on West 153rd Street in Harlem, with the intent of creating a model for developing green affordable housing in New York City. A partnership with Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI), a nonprofit organization representing a consortium of over 90 Harlem congregations united to provide social services and housing, has resulted in a project that is innovative in its programming. One-third of the units are designated for youth aging out of foster care, and the project includes classrooms for a Construction Trades Academy that teaches disadvantaged youth the necessary skills to land construction jobs. The site incorporates a community garden and outdoor classroom space for the benefit of both the residents and the local community. As with any project developed by Jonathan Rose Companies, the building also includes a range of green design elements. Most importantly, the building, which is scheduled for construction completion at the end of 2007, is being constructed for essentially the same square-foot construction cost as “conventional” affordable housing in New York City.

Lessons Learned

Dinkins Gardens was conceived as a project that would demonstrate the possibilities for greening affordable housing. This goal provided the focus for the most important contribution to the project’s success: the selection of an experienced and committed design team. Based on expertise regarding the design of innovative affordable housing, Jonathan Rose Companies and HCCI selected Dattner Architects along with a carefully chosen team of consulting engineers. Dinkins Gardens also demonstrated the importance of including construction professionals as part of the design team. Advice was sought from potential contractors during the design process regarding means and methods as well as pricing for green items. This provided



David and Joyce Dinkins Gardens, Bronx, NY is one of hundreds of affordable green projects now underway from the non-profit developer, Jonathan Rose Companies.

two-way education, both to the design team on budgeting and preferred construction methods, and to the contractors regarding the introduction of innovative elements.

Allocate Time for Research

A key requirement for team member selection is the willingness to allocate time to the research necessary for a green project. Green design is rapidly evolving and even experienced professionals must commit to staying abreast of both the latest innovations and the changing marketplace. Additionally, all project team members must recognize the value and time commitment to participating in an integrated design process. Often seen as one of the keys to a successful green project, this approach utilizes a parallel design process that allows all team members to simultaneously incorporate other team members' design decisions to generate the most economic and efficient design response. Thus the architect can evaluate results from the energy model into his/her building envelope decisions, which provides the mechanical engineer with the parameters for correctly sizing mechanical equipment. All of this is then reincorporated into an update of the energy model, and may even allow for benefits such as the reduced cost of the smaller "right-sized" mechanical equipment to offset the cost of a higher performance exterior wall assembly. This example also demonstrates how the additional up-front cost of energy modeling, if used correctly, can result in savings many times greater than the cost of the model. Additional savings may be found in third party subsidies for the energy modeling, which are often available for affordable housing.

Establish A Green Protocol

Another key to the success of green affordable housing is establishing a green protocol for the project to use as the basis for decision making. While the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating system is one of the best known examples, Dinkins Gardens followed Enterprise's Green Communities design criteria, specifically developed for affordable housing. Green Communities employs a point system, similar to LEED, however with an eye towards prioritizing green elements that take into account the needs and budgetary constraints of affordable housing. In particular, the Green Communities standards focus on operational efficiency and the creation of a healthy living environment.

At Dinkins Gardens, Green Communities criteria served to firmly establish the project's and the development team's commitment to the creation of the highest quality, green affordable housing. Due to the budgetary constraints that are often a foregone conclusion in affordable housing, there is a tendency to propose the cheapest, lowest-quality design as the base case. Against this, any improvements, green or otherwise, are seen as budget "additions" to a minimal project. The Green Communities

criteria, which include many mandatory items, effectively elevate the design discussion to promote a thoughtful comparison of the efficiency and additional value of various green alternatives, versus a simplistic comparison against a "bargain-basement" base case.

Inherent Opportunities

It is precisely because of these budgetary constraints that one of the keys to the successful development of green affordable housing is ensuring that the fundamental building elements are designed with maximum consideration of their sustainable performance. The public often thinks of green design as the addition of space-age gadgetry to buildings to allow for processes such as on-site energy production and waste water treatment; however, for affordable housing, getting the basics right is key to the creation of the greenest possible building. The inherent green design decisions that must be carefully considered include elements of site design, the design of the building envelope, all mechanical systems, and all finish choices.

Taking its cue from the Green Communities standards, Dinkins Gardens was thoughtfully designed to maximize the inherent green benefits of its urban, transit-accessible site. Existing trees were preserved, and an on-site community garden and a series of outdoor classrooms were created for use by the tenants and community. Native species were selected for plantings and permeable paving was specified to allow storm water absorption. The building orientation was carefully considered and solar shading was incorporated into the south-facing facade. Using an energy model as a tool, the building envelope was designed to maximize the insulating capacity and performance of the brick cavity wall, window wall, windows, and roof systems.

High efficiency mechanical systems were selected and sized correctly for the loads anticipated by the energy model. As another example of how green innovations can actually save money, the boiler room was located on the roof, thereby eliminating an 8-story flue and enhancing efficiency by reducing stack effect. To improve indoor air quality, the ventilation system compartmentalized each unit's fresh air intake and exhaust, expelling air through the voids in the concrete plank and thereby eliminating ductwork. Energy Star™ appliances and lighting were specified, and individual electric meters were provided for each unit to increase awareness of electrical usage and promote conservation. Likewise, water-efficient toilets and fixtures were specified throughout. Healthy and sustainable materials, such as low-VOC paints and linoleum, were included in the design. Finally, although Green Communities does not strictly include commissioning (though perhaps it should), tenant and owner operating manuals were developed to explain the upkeep and operation of all building components and systems.

Green Design Enhancements

Although affordable housing must fully realize the

potential of inherent green design elements, there is also a value in incorporating some of the green design enhancements that the public often associates with sustainable design. Dinkins Gardens includes a green roof garden for residents and a rainwater harvesting system that collects rainwater from the roof for site irrigation. These design enhancements not only demonstrate the future potential of green designs, but also increase the impact of a project and provide opportunities for targeted funding. At Dinkins Gardens, both the green roof and rainwater harvesting system were designed to maximize their visibility and promote the understanding of green technology and conservation practices.

A Variation on the Old Model

Perhaps the most important lesson of Dinkins Gardens is the demonstration that green affordable housing need not be thought of as an entirely new animal. Instead, a committed developer, through the selection of a knowledgeable and dedicated team, can conceive of green as a variation on the old model with a new focus. This is true for financing green affordable housing as well. Although there are foundations and organizations that have targeted financing for green buildings, an even greater impact can be made by locating existing conventional funding sources that recognize the value of green design in their funding terms and commitments. Many public

funding sources are instituting a prioritization system for green projects, and lending institutions and syndicators are beginning to reward green projects with more favorable terms in comparison to a conventional project. Because of its commitment to green, Dinkins Gardens received favorable terms in the syndication of its tax credits from Enterprise that resulted in additional financing on the order of six figures. Dinkins Gardens also received grants from Enterprise Green Communities and the Home Depot Foundation that were specifically targeted to green enhancements such as the green roof and the rainwater harvesting system.

Ultimately, the greening of affordable housing dramatically increases the overall quality of the housing produced. The last decade has already seen improvement in the quality of affordable housing, and green design's focus on best practices and building performance has the potential to take it to a new level. In the same way that environmental issues promote the recognition that "we are all in this together," housing advocates can promote the creation of high-performance, high-quality affordable housing as having benefits that extend beyond the immediate residents to the neighbors and greater community. The building industry can also embrace green affordable housing with the awareness that if affordable housing can be made more environmentally responsible, than so can almost any type of development.

David Dinkins housing is expected to be completed in December 2007.



Richard Dattner

Dattner Architects
New York

The Green Way: Via Verde, Bronx, NY

A NH NY ideas competition in 2004 resulted in selection of Via Verde as the winning entry in 2007.



The New Housing New York (NHNY) Legacy Project was a design competition launched in June 2006 for architect-developer teams to design innovative, affordable housing for a site in the South Bronx. The project developed out of a NHNY housing ideas competition held in 2004. The project's goal is to create healthy, sustainable, affordable housing with a high level of design excellence. It seeks to transform the public procurement process and develop replicable, innovative design strategies for affordable housing. The project reflects a public commitment to create the next generation of social housing and seeks to provide a setting for healthy, sustainable living.

The City of New York, through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) designated a vacant 40,000-square-foot lot in the South Bronx for the Legacy Project. The site is a brownfield within a rapidly redeveloping neighborhood. Major support for the project has been given by HPD and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the National Endowment for the Arts, Enterprise Community Partners, and the American Institute of Architects.

Located near the bustling retail and transportation of "The Hub," one of the Bronx's main commercial centers, the project site is situated between a ball field, a public high school, and an assortment of residential developments. The long, narrow, triangular site dramatically slopes down from west to east to a granite retaining wall, a reminder of its former use as a railroad yard.

The competition was organized in two stages: An initial submission of team qualifications resulted in a short-list of five finalists, each of whom submitted design and financing proposals in the second stage of the competition.

The winning entry, submitted by the PRDG team, was announced in January 2007. The PRDG comprises a pair of developers and a pair of architects: The Phipps Houses Group, Jonathan Rose Companies, Dattner Architects and Grimshaw Architects. The PRDG entry was called Via Verde, or the Green Way, in recognition of the tiered green roofs the design features, as well the sustainable approach the design embodies.

The design proposes 214 apartments in three distinct building types: an 18-story tower at the north end of the site, a 6- to 10-story mid-rise duplex building in the middle of the site, and 3- to 4-story townhouses to the south. A dynamic garden serves as the organizing element and spiritual identity for the community. The garden begins at ground level as a courtyard and then spirals upwards through a series of programmed, south-facing roof gardens, creating a promenade that culminates in a sky terrace with dramatic views to the south.

The multifunctional gardens create opportunities for active gardening, fruit and vegetable cultivation, passive recreation and social gathering, while also providing the benefits of stormwater control and enhanced insulation. The buildings take the form of a tendril, rising from grade to the tower, enclosing the courtyard. Most importantly, the gardens will allow the members of the Via Verde community, through a variety of open space experiences, to benefit



A garden that starts at ground level spirals up to a sky terrace on the roof.



from a profound connection to the natural environment while enjoying the benefits of urban living.

A main point of entry leads to residential lobbies and townhouse entries located around a courtyard. The ground floor features retail, community facility spaces, and live-work units, creating a lively street presence. Above the main entrance overlooking the street and courtyard are resident community spaces—including a fitness center and homework center. The top floor of the tower contains a multipurpose community room with access to terraces and spectacular views. A cellar level below the courtyards contains parking, storage and utility services.

A sustainable design approach for affordable housing is important for several reasons: Energy conservation results in direct savings for residents and building managers, while benefiting the community; use of appropriate materials and improved ventilation foster healthy living; outdoor spaces, such as green roofs, reduce environmental impacts, while connecting residents to nature and encouraging physical activity.

Via Verde will set new standards for the sustainable design of affordable housing. The project is being designed to achieve a LEED NC Gold Rating and is participating in the NYSERDA Multi-Family Performance Program. The design will integrate nature into the urban environment. The stepped, landscaped terraces at the heart of the design provide for a variety of outdoor experiences and will enhance the lives of the residents by encouraging them to spend more time outside, gardening, exercising and socializing. The green roofs provide insulation, manage storm water runoff, reduce heat absorption and carbon dioxide emissions; and provide an opportunity for locating photovoltaic and rainwater harvesting systems. Naturally lit stairs and appropriate signage will also encourage physical activity.

Via Verde addresses healthy living throughout its design and execution. In addition to incorporating materials and mechanical systems that promote a healthy environment, the tenant and service strategy promotes healthy living. Within the complex, Montefiore Medical Center will provide primary care and a health education center, Phipps Community Development Corporation will offer case management and wellness services for seniors, and the complex will include a green market or organic food cooperative. The project is expected to be under construction by 2008 and completed by 2010.

Entries to townhouses face a courtyard to be animated by pedestrians entering retail and community spaces.

Frederic Schwartz

Principal
Frederic Schwartz
Architect
New York

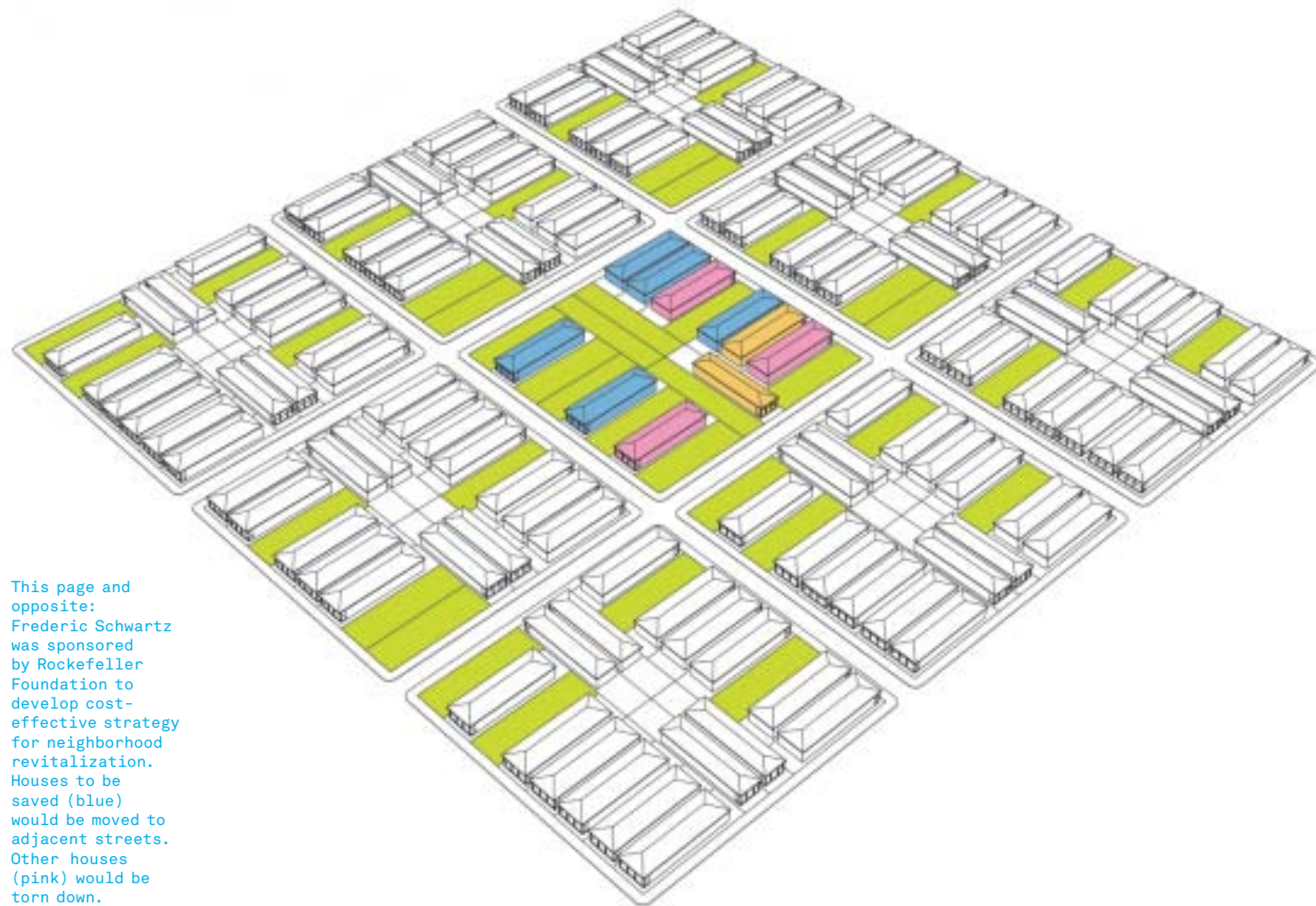
New Orleans NOW: Design and Planning for a Public Housing Crisis

On August 29, 2005, a hurricane of biblical proportions set its eye on New Orleans, exposing the nation's neglect of its aging infrastructure, disappearing coastal wetlands, deteriorating public housing and its failure to protect its people—especially its poor. Like New York City's post-9/11 political mess and mechanizations, nature's wake-up call in New Orleans has been mired in missed opportunities, false promises, ego, greed, corruption and lack of leadership.

The planning of our cities in the face of disaster (natural and political) must reach beyond the Band-Aid of short-term recovery. Disaster offers a unique opportunity to rethink the planning and politics of our metro—regional areas—a chance to redefine our cities and to reassert values of environmental care and social justice, of community building and especially of helping the poor with programs for quality, affordable, sustainable housing.

Public Housing Crisis

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, one of the most pressing and long-term issues in New Orleans is how to redirect failed public housing policies (both federal and local) to best serve the needs of its citizens. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO)



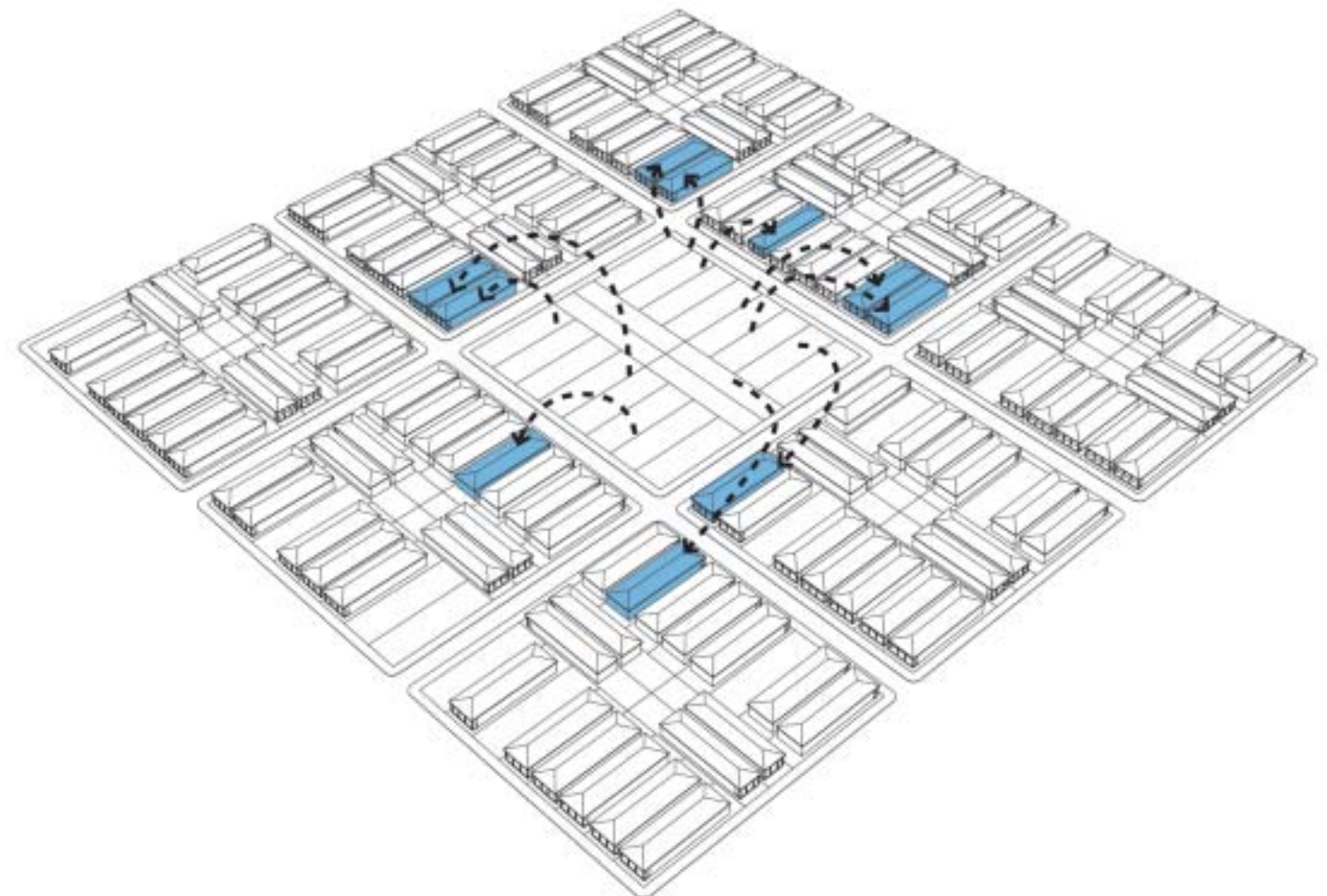
This page and opposite: Frederic Schwartz was sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation to develop cost-effective strategy for neighborhood revitalization. Houses to be saved (blue) would be moved to adjacent streets. Other houses (pink) would be torn down.

think they have a game plan. Their idea is to sell prime inner-city tracts of public housing land cleared of all buildings and give substantial tax incentives to private-sector partners in an effort to jump start mixed-income developments and bring greatly needed new housing and health and community services to these sites. These are laudable goals, but while affordable public housing is desperately needed in New Orleans, the faulty and largely unknown equation of HUD/HANO's 2006 Request for Development Proposals for these major tracts of land required a staggering two-thirds reduction in density—one-third the number of total housing units then divided into three sectors, one-third market-rate, one-third affordable, and one-third assisted. The HUD/HANO equation (one-third times one-third) results in almost 90 percent less public housing units! For example, St. Bernard, one of the largest public housing areas in the city at 45 units per acre, would be reduced to just 15 per acre. Under the government's plan, St. Bernard's 1,800 total units would be reduced to just 200 public (assisted) units, 200 affordable units and 200 market-rate units. The government's reasoning is that current housing densities breed crime and poverty. False! New York City, for example, America's densest city, also has America's lowest crime rate. As a comparison, we are building Harlem's largest new mixed-income housing at over 100 units per acre.

Those who question the government's plans also vehemently protest the destruction of the city's public housing stock, which is worthy of revitalizing because of its architectural, cultural and historic significance and the marginal investment required to upgrade. Two years after Katrina, after much debate, the immediate imperative is to rehabilitate and re-open these still-shuttered buildings to afford all former residents of public housing in New Orleans the opportunity to return to their own homes.

Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP)

The New Orleans planning effort has repeatedly been stalled while people continue to suffer every single day through a number of false starts. Following our successful post-9/11 planning in Lower Manhattan and after witnessing the failure of levees and government, our office redirected its energy to New Orleans in an effort to renew this vibrant historic city that suffers from the nation's highest crime rate, unemployment, a failing school system, widespread corruption and racism, and the lack of decent rental, public and affordable housing. The citizens of New Orleans recognized our commitment, experience and willingness to help by selecting us in a unique process where they controlled the vote in the selection of neighborhood and district planners.



In August 2006, we were selected as one of four planning consultants for the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP). Our work included the largest and most diversely populated area in the city (poor to rich, high ground to low), Planning District 3 and District 4 (including 21 historic neighborhoods and 43 percent of New Orleans' post-Katrina population). The work was completed under the auspices of the New Orleans City Planning Commission and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bush/Clinton Fund.

For five months we worked closely with individual residents, neighborhood associations and public agencies, holding over 100 community meetings to plan and submit for citizen approval 50 "bricks and mortar," action-oriented planning proposals for funding by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) and other state and federal programs. In addition to addressing immediate issues such as infrastructure, housing, open space, sustainability, transportation and safety we prepared short- and long-term planning for two districts and their numerous fine-grain neighborhoods as well as city-wide initiatives.

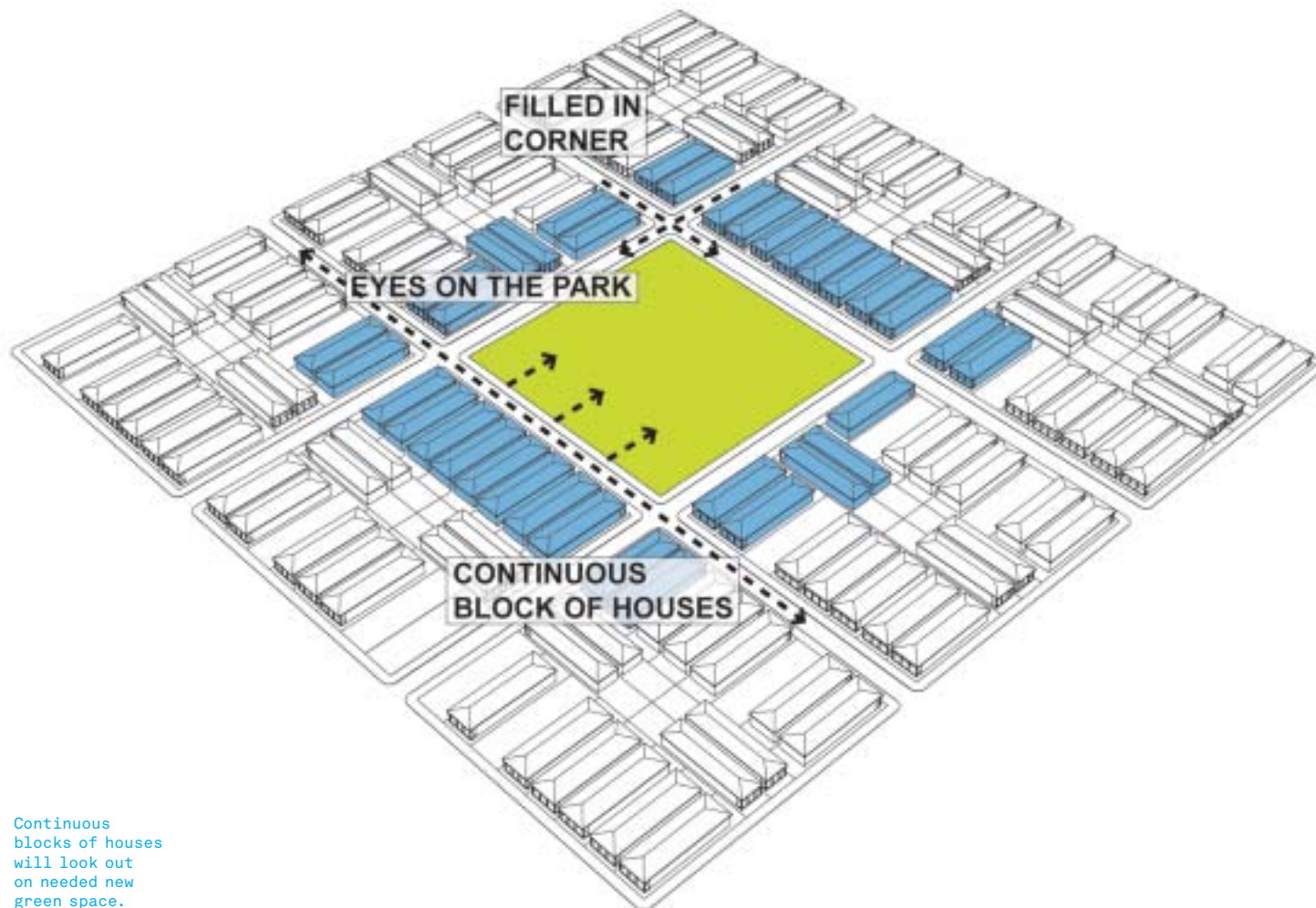
Innovative Design and Planning to Address the Public Housing Crisis

As the lead planner for District 4 which includes

the largest concentration of public housing in the city (Iberville, St. Bernard, Lafitte, and B.W. Cooper), we have made every effort to involve the residents and community in the planning effort as a vocal advocate of mixed income housing that is re-integrated into the neighborhoods through the re-establishment of the historic street grid and strategic architectural and urban interventions.

Our design and planning team started from the premise that every single resident be afforded the opportunity to return to their own neighborhood and that every effort is made to preserve the unique architectural heritage of New Orleans, including public housing buildings of merit. We have been outspoken advocates of affordable, sustainable, quality housing in well-planned mixed-use communities that include retail, community facilities and open space. While density has been a battle cry of those recommending wholesale demolition of the city's public housing projects, density in fact is not the issue: Good planning, long-term care, management and maintenance for sustainable community building are.

The return to New Orleans has leveled off at its current population level of 225,000 from 455,000 pre-Katrina and its 1962 high of 627,525, particularly for the lack of housing and vision. A startling statistic that was recently released in *The New York Times* (July 2007) stated that



Continuous blocks of houses will look out on needed new green space.

77,000 renters have no homes or units to rent. Of our 50 architectural, urban design and planning initiatives, two proposals (one for neighborhoods and homeowners, the other for public housing) are illustrated to suggest ideas to approach the city's housing crisis.

3R Public Housing for District 4: Renewal, Restoration and Redevelopment

Our public housing initiative for over 4,000 units is an integral part of the District 4 Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) that was adopted in May 2007 by the New Orleans City Planning Commission. All four housing project sites, built in the 1940s and '50s and administered by the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), include sensibly planned beautiful two-, three-, and four-story sturdy red brick buildings with red terra cotta tile roofs shaded by majestic oak trees. The buildings and sites have fallen into disrepair primarily through government neglect and mismanagement and the lack of police, parking, shopping, schools and other community amenities. The pre-Katrina population of these four sites was 99 percent African-American. This initiative addresses a basic tenet of the Unified New Orleans Plan that promises every resident of New Orleans the right to return home, including all residents of public housing. The goal is to provide a viable mix of affordable, sustainable, quality housing opportunities for renters, workers, public-assisted families and homeowners.

The 3R Affordable and Public Housing Program renews, restores and redevelops all of the major public housing sites in District 4 (Iberville, St. Bernard, Lafitte, and B.W. Cooper) by establishing mixed-income neighborhoods. The urban design strategy erases the demarcation of the super block and its association with poverty by re-establishing the street grid and seamlessly re-integrating the surrounding neighborhood by blurring the boundaries between public housing and blocks of historic shotgun and other style homes.

Phased renovation of the majority of significant housing buildings, selective demolition and the strategic addition of new structures both within the site boundaries and in the surrounding neighborhood will occur over a three-year period. Existing units will be combined to make larger units, decreasing the total unit density without changing the important total room or population count. New infill housing will be located both within the site and in the adjacent neighborhoods on blighted and vacant properties.

The design of new housing will reflect the look and feel of the surrounding neighborhoods with a mix of both modern interpretations of historic typologies and new urbanist models, and will be built to the highest standards of sustainability and safety from hurricane winds and flooding. The project will utilize federal public infrastructure funding to offset development costs for the new street grid, sidewalks, landscaping and utilities.

While the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has declared its intention to rehabilitate and rebuild public housing in New Orleans,

our proposal ensures significantly higher density than current HUD HOPE 6 requirements, providing housing to accommodate all displaced former tenants in their own neighborhoods. Higher densities will establish a critical mass to support and retail, public transportation, social services, and education and community programs.

Neighborhood Green Block and House Moving Program

The Neighborhood Green Block and House Moving Program is a citywide initiative that addresses the lack of neighborhood public open space, the dire need to renew blighted properties and the problems that neighborhoods and homeowners face resulting from the "jack-o-lantern" or "missing teeth" effect caused by scattered run-down, abandoned houses. Using District 4 neighborhoods as an example, this program was developed with and overwhelmingly approved by the citizens and adopted by the New Orleans City Planning Commission as part of our work for the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP).

The program operates at a manageable neighborhood scale of nine blocks (three-by-three grid) and proposes to physically move all healthy houses (an average of 15 per location) from a 2-acre block in the middle and relocate them to vacant and blighted lots on the surrounding eight blocks. After relocating the houses, the cleared center block would be redeveloped as a new public open space. Our team is in discussion with The Trust for Public Land's New Orleans office to form a partnership that would program, manage and maintain the new park.

Participants will be compensated 100 percent with a one-time payment for their building lots and title to the lots where their houses are relocated. House moving costs and interim expenses would also be fully covered. The program would be 100 percent voluntary, with funds disbursed on a first-come basis from Louisiana's federally funded, multibillion dollar Road Home initiative that provides a one-time tax-deductible payment of up to \$150,000 to homeowners who move back and repair their homes or sell their properties outright to the government. The estimated cost for each neighborhood nine-block area including house moving, administrative and legal fees, landscape and infrastructure is \$5 million with the projected start date on the third anniversary of Katrina.

This "triple-win" program creates benefits for individual homeowners and neighborhoods and the city. Blighted houses and vacant lots are redeveloped to move back into the private market. The public open space network is augmented and improved through the creation of valuable new park land. The program will produce neighborhood-scale planning and design benefits that include filling in undeveloped street corners and vacant lots, improving property value by forestalling the "jack-o-lantern effect," creating continuous rows of housing and providing safety with "eyes on the street" through increased density and a more mindful neighborhood.



Iberville: The Iberville neighborhood (top) will be enhanced with new streets (yellow) for improved circulation (below).



Lafitte: Lafitte will transform derelict industrial space (top) to new green public space (below).

Mark Strauss

Principal
FXFOWLE Architects
New York

Renew, Recycle, Rejoice: Gloucester Green, Gloucester, MA

In 2003, FXFOWLE was named one of six winners in the Boston Society of Architect's "Density" competition, a challenge to design a community that maximizes density and livability housing. Asked to develop a vision for three Boston-area sites using greater-than-normal densities, competing teams found imaginative ways to avoid sprawl. Key concepts from the winning submissions were featured at Density: Myth and Reality, a national conference on density and related issues, held in Boston in September 2003.

The competition challenged entrants to design communities that balanced density and livability at one of three sites in greater Boston. The FXFOWLE Team chose 18.6 acres of sparsely developed land adjacent to the commuter rail station near the center of Gloucester, on the North Shore. Their plan consolidates development to protect existing woodlands and open space, by building on former industrial property, adjacent to the tracks. Additionally, it proposes a neighborhood where live-work housing is supported by business incubators and natural systems are woven throughout to support a sustainable community.



Borrowing from John Nash's Bath Crescent, the plan responds to the natural organization of the site. Atelier housing forms an arc that reinforces an existing and operating rail line. Abandoned shipping containers are the building blocks for the project, which would be recycled as low-cost modules for 351 new live/work housing units. The design responds to the growing surplus of these containers. In 2002 the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey reported that, because of the nation's growing trade deficit, there was a surplus of nearly 950,000 containers in the Newark Elizabeth Port alone.

For the competition project, FXFOWLE envisioned stacked loft duplexes that combine four 8-foot-wide-by-9-foot-high-by-40-foot long containers to create a modular unit width of 16 feet—or a space of up to 1,280 square feet in size. Since containers are built with a clear-span box frame, sheathing can be removed without compromising the structural integrity. Therefore, by clustering the containers and removing the intermediate sheathing, unit widths can be created that are appropriate for housing. To bring light and air into the units, the sheathing would be removed from the end panels, and a modular window wall would be designed to be inserted within the frame.

The south-facing spine of the arc is sheathed in a living bris-soleil of bamboo stalks and plantings that provide natural shading and establish a green backdrop to the city. At the western end of the site, the parcel is reconfigured to create a Gateway Green as a town square to mark the entry into the downtown from Washington Street and to establish a focus for a farmer's market and commercial activities. The plan includes a food cooperative and retail uses on the ground floor, and upper floors are designed to accommodate businesses that outgrow the atelier shop houses. A visitors' center and hotel are also planned for the Green. To the southwest, a community center/theater/hall fronts a civic space that links to nearby public buildings.

The design knits together both the manmade and natural aspects and uses of the site. Fingers extend through the arc, while layers of mutually supportive uses—recreational, civic, retail, office, and housing—are horizontally superimposed for a totally integrated community.

In May 2004 *Urban Land Magazine* published an article about the concept, entitled "Container Housing." The author, William Macht, noted, "While the cargo containers are inexpensively built in low-wage exporting countries, such as China, for under \$2,500, their heavy construction and large volume make them expensive to return. As a result, a standard 320 square foot shipping container may be had for as little as \$600, or less than \$2 per square foot—far less than the least expensive stick framing." Additionally, they are designed to stack ten to twelve units high, fully loaded.

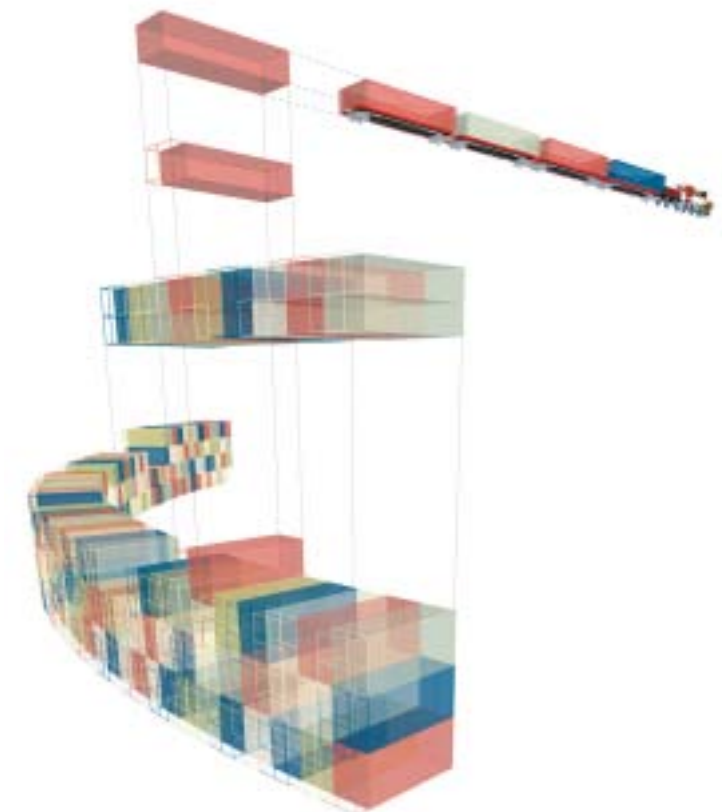
Although this project was published in numerous publications and received considerable developer interest, because it was an ideas competition, the concept was never fully developed. Nevertheless, following the Katrina disaster *Engineering News Record* referenced the project in

a October 17, 2005 editorial, entitled "Emergency Housing Can Be Tough As Steel," and suggested that the country should be advocating similar "out-of-box" thinking.

In a response letter that was published two weeks later, FXFOWLE principal, Mark Strauss, wrote, "Despite considerable initial interest in the concept from developers, we found that these projects were very difficult to move forward because of the time associated with implementing new ideas in housing, especially with regard to educating building officials, unions, and contractors. We also found that in many communities that there are many negative connotations associated with the reuse of shipping containers for housing (prisoners in Afghanistan, for one). To succeed as affordable housing, this concept first has to gain acceptance as "chic" market-rate or artists' housing to withstand the negative aspects of previous associations."

Opposite:
Gloucester, Mass.
Density competition
project consolidates
development to
protect existing
woodlands.

Below:
Units are delivered
by truck.



Gateway Business
Building Blocks

Container
Fit-Out:
Headquarters
and Showroom

Wind Turbines

Upper Floor
Business
Incubator

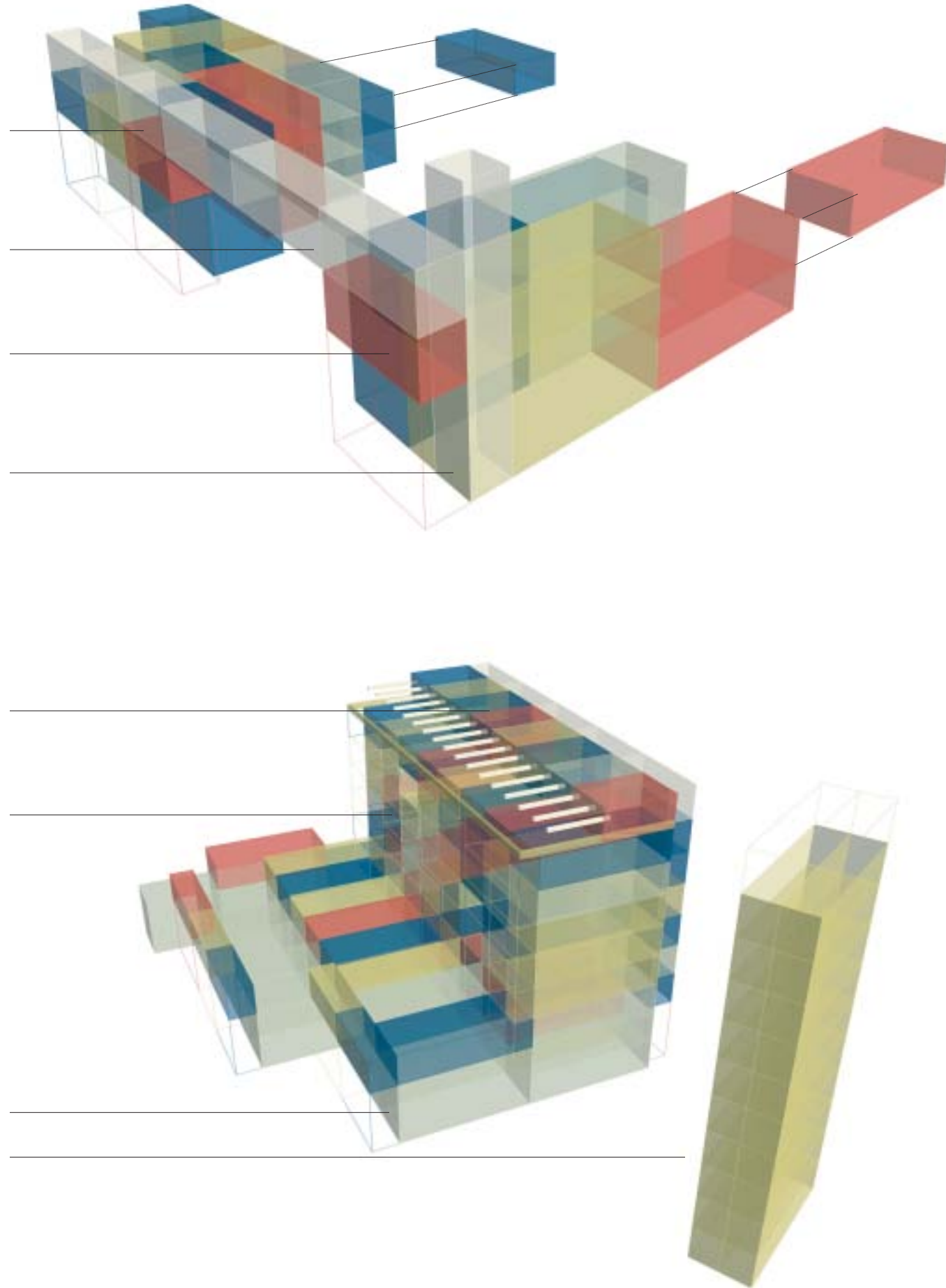
Community Retail

Rooftop
Restaurant

Inn/Hotel

Information
Center

Gateway
Clocktower



Atelier Housing
Layering of Uses

Vertical and
Horizontal
Circulation Spine

Rooftop Hothouses

Playground and
Community Terrace

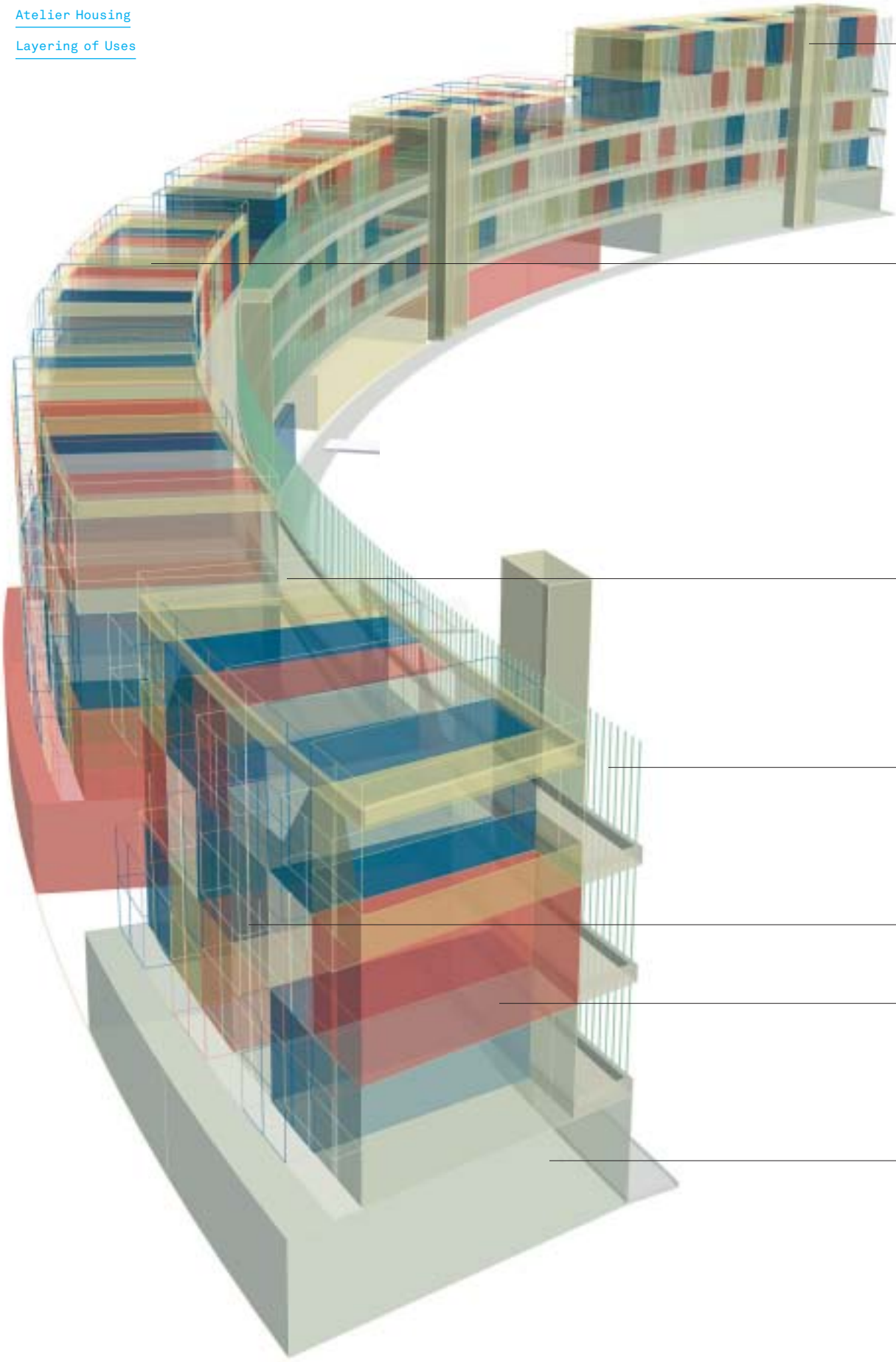
Protective
Windscreen

Living Bris Soleil

Duplex Live/Work
Loft Units

Ground Floor
Shop/Houses/
Galleries

Shipping
containers are
basic building
block. A horizontal
circulation system
puts hot houses
on roof with
houses and shops
on ground floor.



Response

Mark Ginsberg
Partner
Curtis + Ginsberg Architects
New York, NY

The Housing Act of 1949 pledged a decent home for every American family. In the first 25 years after the act was passed significant progress has been made in achieving this goal. In those 25 years some neighborhoods were “cleared” out of existence, but large amounts of public assisted housing were built and operated.

In the early 1970s policies changed. There was a withdrawal of the federal commitment and funding for affordable housing. At that time New York tottered near bankruptcy. And some of New York’s affordable housing was abandoned or burned. In the 1980s and ’90s, as the population grew, much of this housing was restored though renovation. This housing was often over the permissible zoning bulk, did not have to provide parking, and did not have to meet current buildings codes. But it did provide good quality housing. In addition, the city gave away much of its vacant land to build low-density (one-, two-, and three-family) housing. This housing was cheap to build, particularly with free land, and fulfilled the American dream of a front door and a parking pad outside one’s house. However, this new housing was at a density of less than half of the brown-stones and tenements it replaced. In the last five to ten years, we still do not have a federal commitment to affordable housing. But we have had a major commitment by New York City to build affordable, largely infill, housing.

What do we see from the Norfolk, New Orleans, and New York case studies? All show much greater community involvement than what we had in the past. There is a much greater commitment to sustainability and density. Paul Freitag’s comment that green equals quality is interesting. If true, it makes sustainability less likely to be a short-term fad. Development of rental buildings where the developer will be paying for the operation of the building encourages energy efficiency to a greater degree than home ownership. Most homebuyers are not educated enough to know when the sustainable features are real and when they are just greenwash. Density is the single most important issue related to sustainability. New York is the most energy-efficient city in the country because of its density and its high reliance on mass transportation. Some 60 percent of New Yorkers walk, bike, or take mass transit as compared to approximately 40 percent in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. Some 85 percent of Manhattan’s residents walk, bike or take mass transit.

What was clear in the three presentations is that there are two critical factors in affordable housing: political leadership and financial strength. Norfolk has demonstrated political leadership and concentrated its limited funds to support clear objectives. New York has had political leadership from Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Shaun Donovan of the Department of Housing

Preservation and Development. New Orleans has had poor political leadership and its limited financial resources have been squandered by local leaders. So if there is a renewed commitment to quality design and planning, what are the risks and opportunities?

Commissioner Donovan talks about how land prices in New York have been increasing 70 percent per year over the last few years. With New York’s population at record levels and housing growing scarcer, it is more expensive. This may start to justify decking over rail yards and highways to create new land, but this land will be costly, putting pressure on all other costs related to affordable housing.

We have been in good financial times. If these times do not continue there may not be as much money available for affordable housing. The one ray of hope is the change in control of Congress. Democratic congressional leadership is more receptive to affordable housing, but Republican policies of the last few years leave no money available. Sustainability is here to stay. With global warming a reality, a strong commitment to reducing carbon footprints will continue to grow.

Finally, David Dixon talked about the changes in the typical household. It is no longer a family with a man, woman and two children. Our housing has not changed to reflect these changes in the typical household. Ten years ago Magnus Magnusson suggested a housing type for single a mother that was based on co-housing. Four mothers and their children would each have their own bedrooms sharing a living room and kitchen. The concept is that the mothers would share childcare, cooking, and income. It was an interesting idea. We should begin testing the concept.

Response

Lisa Chamberlain
Real Estate Reporter
The New York Times

Paul Freitag of Jonathan Rose Companies said that “green” has become synonymous with “quality.” That is, in fact, a good thing, because people don’t always see the value of creating quality affordable housing. Sustainability not only benefits the people who live there, but also the community at large. It doesn’t really matter what we have to call it to make affordable housing also livable.

Before the panelists spoke, Richard Dattner and I talked about the complexity of funding these types of projects because, as a society, we can’t seem to muster the political will to provide direct subsidy to build affordable housing. We have to come up with complex formulas so that profit can be had from building affordable housing, with an indirect subsidy in the form of tax credits. The sheer complexity of putting these deals together limits how much gets built.

While little in the way of intentional affordable housing gets built—and when it does, it’s a monumental effort—there is plenty of unintentional affordable housing happening all over the country. Here are three examples affordable housing built without subsidy.

- **Trailer slums in the Southern California desert**
In the desert near Palm Springs, migrant workers live in conditions that no one would believe exist in America. I’m going to quote the *Los Angeles Times* story: “Out here—just a few miles from world-class golf resorts, private hunting clubs and polo fields—half-naked children toddle barefoot through mud and filth while packs of feral dogs prowl piles of garbage nearby. Thick smoke from mountains of burning trash drifts through broken windows. People—sometimes 30 or more—are crammed into trailers with no heat, no air-conditioning, undrinkable water, flickering power and plumbing that breaks down for weeks or months at a time.... Riverside County officials say there are between 100 and 200 illegal trailer parks in the valley, but a Housing Coalition says the number could be as high as 500.... Despite the conditions, park owners say they are providing a vital service in an area where housing prices have soared.”

- **Foreclosed property**
“Affordable” housing is being created by an explosion of foreclosures as people have gotten caught overspending on housing. I’m originally from Cleveland, and right now there are entire neighborhoods being emptied out because of foreclosures from people being swindled by predatory lenders. In a working-class neighborhood just south of downtown called

Slavic Village, there are 600 boarded-up homes, with more to come. But it’s not just low-income areas facing foreclosure problems. Shaker Heights is a beautiful inner-ring suburb of Cleveland, one of the country’s first planned communities, and the city is struggling mightily to keep up properties that are empty. Rather than watching homes rot, the city decided to spend a lot of money maintaining these properties until a more permanent solution emerges.

- **Ex-urbs**
Another type of accidental affordable housing is happening in ex-urban areas around the country. The real estate boom of the past five years has pushed development further and further into outlying areas, and the conditions have been ripe for cheap developments to spring up, which are two and sometimes three hours away from job centers. A combination of the deep-seated American Dream of owning your own home coupled with land-use policies that have pushed affordability to the outermost fringes could create what some urban planners believe will become the low-income ghettos of the 21st century. What were supposed to be starter homes for the middle class could devolve into low-income slums with few services, no commercial activity, and a long commute from jobs centers. As energy costs rise (these are not green/energy efficient homes) and gas prices make community unaffordable, these tract home communities won’t be able to maintain their value.

While it’s always been clear that market forces do not build affordable housing, that is actually misleading. Market forces don’t build livable, affordable housing at all.

Affordable Housing

Speakers/ Sponsors

Speakers

Lance Jay Brown

Lance Jay Brown served two terms as chair of the School of Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture at the City College of New York (CUNY), where he is now Coordinator for Design. Principal of Lance Jay Brown, Architecture + Urban Design, he received the 2003 ACSA Distinguished Professorship for Life and, that same year, the Fellowship, American Institute of Architects. In 2007, he received the AIA Topaz Award for distinction as an educator.

Lisa Chamberlain

Lisa Chamberlain is a contributor to the real estate section of *The New York Times*, *New York Observer*, and *Metropolis*. She began her journalism career at an alternative weekly paper in Cleveland, Ohio. She completed the mid-career program at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism with a concentration in urban planning.

David Chapin

David Chapin has been the director of the Environmental Psychology Program at CUNY since 1986. He graduated from University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in architecture. Currently, he is conducting research at the Salk Institute, San Diego, on how architectural icons become meaningful. The Institute worked previously with the Environmental Psychology Program when former Professor Garry Winkel spoke.

Richard Dattner

Richard Dattner founded Dattner Architects in New York City in 1964, after receiving his BArch from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Known for design excellence in urban design and civic architecture, Dattner Architects has received over 100 design awards. Dattner is the recipient of the 1994 Thomas Jefferson Award for public Architecture from the American Institute of Architects and the 1992 Medal of Honor from the AIA New York Chapter. He is a peer reviewer for the New York City Mayor's Office on City Construction and the General Services Administration Design Excellence Program. He has taught or served as design critic at Columbia University, MIT, Princeton University, University of Wisconsin, City College of New York, the Cooper Union, the City University of New York, and Cornell University.

David Dixon

David Dixon leads Goody Clancy's Planning and Urban Design division. His work has earned awards from the American Institute of Architects, Congress for the New Urbanism, Society for College and University Planning, and the American Society of Landscape Architects. In 2007 Dixon won the AIA's Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Architecture for his achievements in support of the public sector. Dixon holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University, MArch from University of Pennsylvania, and Master of Urban Design from Harvard University.

Ann Ferebee

Ann Ferebee is founding director of the Institute for Urban Design. Launched in 1979 with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute held its first program at the University of Pennsylvania and later programs at Harvard, University of Toronto and Pompidou Center, Paris. Ferebee is a design journalist whose book, *History of Modern Design*, was recognized as among the best 100 illustrated texts of 1970. Ann is currently working on a second edition of the book.

Paul Freitag

Paul Freitag is the development studio director for Jonathan Rose Companies. He is a registered architect and LEED Accredited Professional, with 20 years experience in planning, design, and real estate development. Much of his career has focused on the redevelopment of underutilized properties for affordable housing and social service programs in distressed neighborhoods in the New York metropolitan region. He is also knowledgeable regarding the incorporation of green design into development projects and has particular expertise with the Enterprise Green Communities criteria for affordable housing.

Mark Ginsberg

Mark Ginsberg, a founding partner of Curtis + Ginsberg Architects, holds a MArch from University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Art in theater design and government from Wesleyan University. Mark was the president of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter in 2004, and the former chair and current member of its Housing and Planning and Urban Design Committees. Mark was the recipient of the Women's Prison Association and Home Inc.'s Sarah Powell Huntington Leadership Award in 2000, recognizing his commitment to public welfare and social justice.

Rose V. Gray

Rose V. Gray has served since 1990 as director of development for Asociacion de Puertorriquenos en Marcha, Inc. (APM), a nonprofit community development corporation in Philadelphia. During her 17-year tenure, she has developed more than 220 units of affordable rental housing, a daycare center and a retail center called Borinquen Plaza. She has secured more than \$86 million for APM's development plan. She is a member of the Reinvestment Community Lending Institute and serves as one of six inner-city advisors for the Urban Land Institute.

Christine Madigan

Christine Madigan is senior vice president for development of Enterprise Homes, Inc., where she leads the development staff. Prior to joining Enterprise in 2001, Madigan was an assistant vice president for MetLife Real Estate Investments, and oversaw a \$400 million portfolio of commercial and residential real estate. A graduate of the Yale School of Management and Yale Divinity School, Madigan holds masters degrees in business administration and in religion and the arts, and a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University.

Brian Phillips

Brian Phillips is founding principal of Interface Studio, a multidisciplinary design office in Philadelphia. Before opening Interface Studio in 2004, he worked in the Philadelphia office of Wallace, Roberts & Todd for seven years. Interface Studio's Sheridan Street Housing project won the 2006 AIA Philadelphia Design Excellence Awards Silver Medal for its, as well as the Residential Architect Merit Award in 2007. Phillips studied at the University of Oklahoma and received his MArch from the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches architecture and urban design at Temple University and Drexel University, and holds a visiting faculty appointment at the Technological University of Monterey in Queratero, Mexico.

Frederic Schwartz

Frederic Schwartz is the principal of Frederic Schwartz Architect, based in New York. His firm recently won the Pike County Public Library National Competition in Mitford, Connecticut, and in 2005, he won the Shanghai Fortune World Tower competition. He directed the New York office of Venturi Scott Brown from 1980 to 1985. Schwartz graduated from University of California, Berkeley, in 1973. He received a MArch from Harvard in 1978.

Mark Strauss

Mark Strauss leads FXFOWLE's Planning and Urban Design Studio. As past president of the AIA New York Chapter, Mark has been an advocate of urban design excellence as part of public policy. Strauss was director of planning and an associate partner at Kohn Pedersen Fox prior to establishing his own firm, Jambehekar Strauss, which later became absorbed by Fox & Fowle. He received a BArch from Cornell University in 1976, and a Master of Urban Planning from City College in New York in 1977.

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