

Magnusson Architecture and Planning breaks ground on a sustainable, mixed-use complex at 2050 Grand Concourse in the Bronx

The development will bring 96 units of affordable and supportive housing and will house the relocated headquarters of Unique People Services



Rendering courtesy Magnusson Architecture and Planning.

New York, NY (February 3, 2020) – Construction began on a mixed-use, mixed-income development in the Bronx’s Fordham Heights. Designed by [Magnusson Architecture and Planning](#) (MAP) for Unique People Services (UPS) and development partner Robert Sanborn Development, the 13-story mixed-income building is the latest in MAP’s large portfolio of innovative affordable housing projects that break the mold and undo negative stereotypes about affordable housing. When completed, 2050 Grand Concourse will feature a combination of creative social programming, advanced sustainability strategies and distinct, aesthetically pleasing design.

Located at the SE corner of E. Burnside and Grand Concourse, the 13 story, 87,000 square foot structure will include 61,550 square feet of affordable and supportive housing with 25 units for low income families, 15 units for moderate income families, 30 units for single adults living with HIV/AIDS, and 25 units for single adults with chronic mental illness. The residential program will also include an on-site laundry opening onto a landscaped outdoor terrace in the rear yard and a community room on the 13th floor which will open onto two landscaped roof decks.

The Grand Concourse is a major, historically significant thoroughfare in the Bronx lined with renowned examples of Art Deco apartment buildings. The design of this development pays homage to this rich context by reinterpreting some of the main ideas of the style for contemporary affordable housing. For instance, brick and metal, both prominent materials in the art deco movement, are used across the exterior; corner windows, a distinct feature of apartment buildings of the time, have been included; and bold geometric forms which were characteristic of the period were introduced through details such as angled planes at the window openings and varied base heights accentuated by contrasting materials.

As one of the tallest buildings in the immediate area, setbacks and multiple cladding materials and colors help to define separate volumes, bringing the massing into harmony with the many older buildings that surround the property.

With respect for the residential character along this stretch of the Grand Concourse, and given the site's small frontage there, placing the residential entrance along the famed boulevard was appropriate. This also allowed the much larger street frontage on the mixed-use avenue of East Burnside to be reserved for the community facility space.

Taking advantage of the site's grade change, the 10,000 square foot community facility will span three floors below the residential portion of the building, and become the new headquarters for the building owner - the nonprofit affordable/supportive housing developer and service provider Unique People Services (UPS). The space will also offer community amenities for area residents and organizations including access to free WiFi and conference, training, and event space. The community facility, will activate a vacant section of East Burnside Avenue adding to the otherwise vibrant commercial corridor.

"Because the services provided by UPS are integral to the community, architecturally the building needed to reflect this important relationship," said **Fernando Villa, AIA, LEED AP BD+C Principal, Magnusson Architecture and Planning**. "The large window walls facing E. Burnside evoke feelings of transparency, openness and welcoming. They also give light back to the neighborhood in the evening."

Both the residential and community facility programs support key aspects of the existing community revitalization and historic preservation efforts in Community Board 5, and along the Grand Concourse.

Aiming to achieve LEED Gold certification, 2050 Grand Concourse is a NYSERDA Buildings of Excellence Award winner. The sustainable design features include a host of measures to improve energy efficiency, decrease the building's carbon footprint, and reduce the heat island effect, manage water responsibly, generate on-site power and ensure resiliency.

ABOUT MAP

For over three decades, Magnusson Architecture and Planning (MAP) has worked with non-profit groups, municipalities, and for-profit developers to improve the lives of those who live and work in their communities. MAP's award-winning buildings and urban revitalization projects serve as the foundation for vibrant and healthy neighborhoods. Since our founding in 1986, we have been at the forefront of quality housing, sustainable building and urban design.

MAP offers comprehensive architectural and planning services that blend design excellence with technical and planning expertise. The firm specializes in mixed-use developments including affordable, supportive, senior, mixed-income, and market-rate housing; urban design and, community-based planning projects.

In 2015 MAP established a Volunteer Program. Every month a team of staff, friends, and family donate personal time to projects that serve residents of the buildings the firm has designed, improve features in those buildings or support the clients of MAP's nonprofit partners.

ABOUT UNIQUE PEOPLE SERVICES

Unique People Services, Inc. (UPS) is a Bronx-based nonprofit which offers long-term and permanent housing for formerly homeless persons with mental illness, transitional and permanent housing for formerly homeless persons with HIV/AIDS, and permanent housing for adults with developmental disabilities. 2050 Grand Concourse's 95 unit mixed-use, mixed-population and mixed-income supportive housing building will further the UPS mission to offer compassionate services and quality housing for those in need.

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