

# Real Estate Journal

THE LARGEST WEEKLY COMMERCIAL/INVESTMENT NEWSPAPER IN THE WORLD

## Plant Fantasies installs green roof and plantings for Mt. Hope Community Center in the Bronx



Rendering, the green roofs and plantings at the Mt. Hope Community Center - Bronx, NY

Plant Fantasies, a landscape contractor, is helping to bring green to a concrete world in a disadvantaged section. The certified woman-owned business enterprise (WBE), founded in 1987 by president and CEO Teresa Carleo, is installing a pair of green roofs and planting trees and shrubs at Mt. Hope Community Center. Set to open this summer, the center will feature a landscaped courtyard, green roofs and will be one of the first examples of sustainable architecture in the borough.

Carleo said, "We're thrilled to be part of the effort to bring a healthful environment to this community."

Mount Hope Housing Co. CEO Shaun Belle said, "We want to create a visual patchwork of green in an asphalt jungle with very few open spaces. Our goal is to soften up the landscape with trees, shrubs and flowering plants."

Three levels of planted outdoor terraces will offer views from multiple levels of the building, and the 3,600 s/f green roof - plus a smaller, 900 s/f roof - will perform water retention and cooling functions for the building.

The landscaping and green roofs were designed by Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects (MNLA). Jennifer Cooper, RLA, landscape architect with MNLA, selected lightweight soil and sedum plantings that are drought resistant and do well in extreme heat and cold, as well as windy and dry environments. Gravel access paths parallel the angle of the building and create a pleasing pattern. Cooper said, "Residents of the many buildings that surround the community center may now look down and enjoy the new, green view."

The ground level street tree plantings, a new variety of American elm, also add much needed greenery to this section. The courtyard provides an entry oasis into the community center.

Cooper said that she worked with Carleo and her team on the installation of a green roof at Millennium Towers in Battery Park City in 2006. Based on the success of the project, MNLA recommended Plant Fantasies for Mt. Hope Community Center.

Belle said that Mt. Hope Community Center will be green on the inside as well. "Air quality is very important in a neighborhood that has one of the highest asthma rates in the nation."