# Nos Quedamos, MJM Construction and Melrose Assoc. break ground on sustainable El Jardin de Seline project

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Ground was broken recently on a new, sustainable affordable housing project in the Melrose Commons neighborhood. El Jardin de Seline, an entirely green mixed-use, mixed-income rental building, will be one of the first of its kind in the neighborhood. Developed by a joint venture of Nos Quedamos, MJM Construction Services LLC, and Melrose Assoc., El Jardin will rise 12 stories on the corner of East 158th St. and Melrose Ave. The challenge of developing an affordable, LEED Silver building offered the development team and their architect, Magnusson Architecture and Planning (MAP), the chance to exercise its creativity and experience in sustainable design.

Funded by the New York City Housing Development Corp., the New York City Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development, Richman Housing Resources, HSBC Bank USA and NYSERDA, El Jardin will be comprised of 84 units arrayed in a mixture of studio, one, and two-bedroom apartments. These units will be available to a mix of residents making up to 60% and 80% of AMI. Additionally, residents will have access to over 2,000 s/f of community space including a laundry room and an outdoor courtyard at the second level. El Jardin will also provide the community with 6,000 s/f of retail space and 12,000 s/f of parking.

"Nos Quedamos has been a champion for sustainability in the neighborhood since its inception," said Yolanda Gonzalez, executive director. "MAP has helped us reach that goal by designing our greenest building yet."

With technical assistance from Steven Winter Associates, El Jardin de Seline will achieve a LEED Silver rating as well as being NYSERDA Energy Star certified and Enterprise Green Communities compliant.  Meeting these stringent energy requirements will be achieved through a variety of sustainable elements including: daylight and occupancy sensors in common areas; energy star fixtures and appliances; bamboo flooring; green roofs at setbacks; recycled content; energy efficient windows; thru-plank ventilation and solar panels on the building's roof.

Achieving such lofty goals for sustainability required the development team, and its development consultant, Aileen Gribbin of Forsyth Street Advisors, to put together an innovative financing package and to work together from project inception in order to integrate the design and finance processes. In addition to funds from HPD, HDC, HSBC and Richman, the team will take part in the Enterprise Green Communities Program as well as the NYSERDA Green Affordable Housing Program which offers financing for achieving LEED Silver rating as well as for Energy Star certification. Acquisition financing for the project was provided by Enterprise Community Partners.

"We believe sustainable design is important to our communities," said Manny Kanaris of MJM Construction Services, "in addition to being better for our health and the health of the environment, it makes a building more efficient and more affordable in the long term. Our innovative partnership, crafted with legal counsel from David Goldstein of Goldstein Hall, made it possible to develop an

elegant, sustainable home for residents while maintaining affordability."

At 12 stories, El Jardin will be the tallest building in the Melrose Commons neighborhood and MAP took advantage of this to design a building that evokes the grand design of the borough's architectural history. Art deco motifs recall old Bronx style while a palette of materials consistent with other local buildings help to weave El Jardin into the fabric of the existing neighborhood.