



CetraRuddy to provide design services for Clarkson Estates

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Rendering, 329 Clarkson Avenue - Brooklyn, NY

Brooklyn, NY Architecture, planning and interior design firm CetraRuddy has been selected as part of the winning team chosen for a 291-unit affordable housing complex. Health Science Center at Brooklyn Foundation currently owns the project location, called Site L and located at 329 Clarkson Ave.

“We are proud to be involved in New York State’s vanguard investment in affordable and sustainable housing,” said Eugene Flotteron, AIA, principal of CetraRuddy.

Clarkson Estates will provide health care access, permanently affordable housing, and healthy food access and outdoor spaces. A unique feature of Clarkson Estates is how it aims to address systemic issues in U.S. inner cities. There will be 291 affordable apartments for families and individuals, but also 146 units dedicated to: Youth aging out of foster care; formerly incarcerated individuals, and some who are also formerly homeless youth. CetraRuddy will lead the design for the site, the housing and also the 30,000 s/f community center. Open to the public and called the HUB, the center is conceived to strengthen Flatbush in a variety of ways, according to the project team.

Clarkson Estates is also expected to promote economic development and workforce training services, while also providing youth development and violence prevention services. In addition, the new building’s architectural and interior design are planned to complement the mission of Clarkson Estates by supporting its mission of offering health and wellness amenities for residents and nonresidents alike.

“It is a tremendous opportunity for our firm to help address the challenges of affordable housing in our home city,” said Flotteron. “Central Brooklyn has been a notably disadvantaged area in New York State, and our design and planning will take into consideration how to build for better standards of living and for an engaged and supportive community.”

A key aspect of the design will be the landscape architecture and site design, to be developed with landscape designer Starr Whitehouse, according to CetraRuddy. Residents and neighbors will have

a connection to a planned “urban oasis,” a lushly planted interior courtyard and rooftop bringing the neighborhood a much-needed connection to nature—a rarity in affordable housing projects. A series of landscaped terraces will include community gardens, fitness areas, innovative play spaces, sculpture gardens and even event spaces.

This month, New York governor Cuomo unveiled the details of the project, awarded to non-profit community-based developer CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc. with CAMBA, Inc., as social service provider and community facility operator for Clarkson Estates. The massive and comprehensive sustainable, affordable and supportive housing project is part of \$1.4 billion in state-funded investment—organized through the Vital Brooklyn Initiative—set to include a 30,000 s/f community hub.

Flatbush, like many high-need communities, contends with chronic economic and racial disparities, said Flotteron. “Stable and permanently affordable housing can address a range of incomes, household sizes and community needs,” he said, “and Clarkson Estates will be a new model for urban development.”

Medical care for residents is located nearby with SUNY Downstate, Kings County, and Kingsbrook Hospitals. The Clarkson Estates project will add to the offerings, by including its own on-site CAMBA Health Homes and Screening Center. This accessible and comprehensive medical care—open to community members—will offer another element of preventative care seen as essential in many urban communities.

“CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc. and CAMBA, Inc., are honored and grateful to be awarded Site L/329 Clarkson Ave., as part of this second round of the Vital Brooklyn Initiative,” said Joanne Oplustil, president and CEO of CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc. and CAMBA, Inc. “The community’s needs for expanded options for healthcare access, permanently affordable housing, local food and outdoor spaces have never been more evident. The vision for this development is to create equitable housing opportunities that in turn create a more equitable future for Flatbush. Housing is fundamental to stability and with this sustainable, affordable and supportive development, we aim to provide the community with better resources for a better tomorrow.”

Resources planned to be available at the HUB include:

- Childcare services
- Health screening center
- Small business services incubator and workforce training
- Violence prevention and mediation center
- Youth education and development center
- Technology training center that includes adult education and financial literacy classes
- Full-sized basketball court for general community use and access, competitive basketball leagues, and community events
- Food pantry and café

Design studio and exhibition space.

Just as significantly, the HUB will be dedicated and named to honor Dr. Roy Hastick, who passed away from COVID-19 in April. A visionary business leader, Dr. Hastick was known for devoting his time to the Brooklyn community. He founded the Caribbean-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CACCI) and provided years of business assistance and advice.

Just as Hastick worked to build a more equitable Brooklyn, Clarkson Estates will create a more equitable future for Flatbush, according to the project team.

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