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Brownfield turnaround

The Arker Companies, a leading developer of affordable housing in New York City, has set two new standards for brownfield redevelopment in its transformation of a once-contaminated Bronx brownfield site into 100 units of high-quality, affordable housing.

State environmental officials have certified that White Plains Courtyard at 2060 White Plains Road has attained the state's top-of-class "Track 1" cleanup

ranking. According to The Arker Companies, this development represents the first affordable housing initiative in the state – and also the first brownfield remediation in the Bronx – to have gained this distinction.

Under the rarely awarded "Track 1" state designation, because of the thoroughness of site remediation, White Plains Courtyard won qualification for "unrestricted use" by meeting the most

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Arker Companies sets new standards for brownfield redevelopment as once-contaminated property turned into 100 affordable housing units.



Borough President Adolfo Carrión presents award for environmental stewardship to The Arker Companies on April 29 at White Plains Courtyard in the Bronx. From left: Albert Alvarez representing Councilman Joel Rivera; Alex Arker of The Arker Companies; Mr. Carrión; Sol Arker and Dan Moritz of The Arker Companies; NYC Housing Development Corporation president Marc Jahr; and Fred Weinstein of the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

demanding and stringent environmental standards set by New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program.

The Arker Companies' redevelopment initiative – which includes retail space occupied by a Staples store -- is situated in the Morris Park neighborhood. The Staples outlet employs approximately 30 people on a full-time or part-time basis.

"More than ever, New Yorkers need first-rate affordable housing," said Sol Arker, a principal of The Arker Companies. "The Arker Companies is proud to have set two historic milestones at White Plains Courtyard. Reflecting our commitment to environmental preservation, this remediation is the first affordable housing complex in New York State to meet the state's strictest brownfield cleanup criteria. In addition, this site stands as the first brownfield turnaround in the Bronx to have ever met the state's highest cleanup standard."

"We are gratified to be recognized by New York State as pioneers in responsible development," said Arker.

Arker acknowledged the assistance of Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr. in helping to advance the project. He also said that City Council members James Vacca and Joel Rivera – as well as State Senator Jeff Klein – played helpful roles in the creation of White Plains Courtyard. In addition, Assemblywoman Naomi Rivera, State Sen. Ruben Diaz and the state's Department of Environmental Conservation lent their support to the initiative.

White Plains Courtyard is a seven-story, 120,000 s/f development that includes 16,500 s/f of ground-floor retail space. The formerly contaminated site had been occupied by a shuttered gas station. The \$27 million development includes a rooftop terrace above the commercial space, which serves as a common area for residents. On Jan. 16, the developer filed a formal "notice of completion" of site cleanup with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

"I'm pleased to be part of this project because The Arker Companies has done a great job building affordable housing of high quality in The Bronx," said Borough President Carrión. "White Plains Courtyard shows that it's possible for a developer to build housing in a profitable way while taking the environment into account. The Arker Companies has achieved this by changing a contaminated area into one of New York State's 'top of the class' cleanup sites."

The development received tax credits through the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, tax-exempt bonds through New York City Housing Development Corporation, and financial and technical support through the state DEC. "Under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the city's housing agencies were instrumental in making White Plains Courtyard a reality," said Arker. "We are pleased to play a part in helping the Mayor's New Housing Marketplace Plan achieve its goal of creating and preserving affordable homes and apartments."