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Arker Companies leading \$60M Staten Island affordable job

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) have selected The Arker Companies, The Domain Companies and Neighborhood Housing Services of Staten Island (NHS) to undertake a \$60-million redevelopment of the Markham Gardens public housing development located in the West Brighton neighborhood on Staten Island's north shore.

Markham Gardens is the third NYCHA site to be redeveloped through a collaboration between HPD, NYCHA and HDC that will lead to 5,000 affordable housing units. To date two other redevelopment RFPs have been awarded for NYCHA sites at University Macombs and Brook Willis,

which are both located in the Bronx. The collaboration is part of Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan which will provide affordable housing for 500,000 New Yorkers over ten years.

The Markham Gardens redevelopment will create a mixed-income community of rental apartments and for-sale homes. The design will be environmentally sustainable, using energy-efficient and green building design. It will include 240 mixed-income rental units of which 150 will be reserved for Section 8 voucher recipients referred by NYCHA, including former Markham Garden tenants who wish to return. The remaining 90 units will be affordable to residents with incomes between \$42,350 to \$85,080 for a family of four. The redevelopment also includes 25 two-family homes for moderate-income families as well as a park, outdoor seating areas with extensive landscaping, and a 6,000-s/f recreational center consisting of an indoor basketball court, exercise facility, computer center and classrooms.

The complex was built in 1943, during World War II, as temporary housing for workers who were employed under defense contracts at nearby shipyards. Following the war, Markham Gardens became a NYCHA development that served low-income families. The existing structures, which are undersized by current standards and have aged and deteriorated beyond reasonable repair, will be demolished.

"The redevelopment of Markham Gardens will create 290 new affordable residential units while providing updated amenities for tenants and integrating sustainable design elements," said HPD Commissioner Shaun Donovan. "For two decades New York City has been using land taken in tax foreclosure to develop affordable housing. Now that this supply is exhausted we are developing innovative strategies and collaborations to identify new land sources. Our partnership with NYCHA is yielding success and contributing towards the 165,000 units of housing that will be created and preserved through Mayor Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan, the most ambitious municipal affordable housing plan in the nation."

Former Markham Garden residents have relocated to other NYCHA properties or received Section 8 vouchers at their request. Those former Markham residents who lived in the complex on April 1, 2004 will be invited to return to the redeveloped site. Demolition is expected to begin this winter, with completion projected by the end of 2008.

"This plan was born from NYCHA's historical commitment to provide, decent, affordable housing for low-income New Yorkers," NYCHA Chairman Tino Hernandez said. "The residents who have lived in this neighborhood and made it a community over the years will come back to a new and better Markham Gardens."