



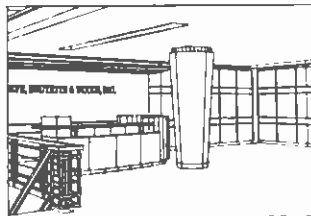
Melrose Commons,
Larsen Shein Ginsberg + Magnusson



Siegel Swanson loft,
Abelow Connors Sherman Architects



J.P. Morgan Investment Management
Group, Sydness Architects



Keefe, Bruyette & Woods
headquarters, Cetra/Ruddy, Inc.



Donna Karen Collection boutique,
Manhasset, Architectureproject

**Places to Live, to Work,
and to Shop**

by *Nina Rappaport*

In the South Bronx, the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan (OCULUS, June 1995, p. 12) is moving forward again. Construction began in November at the Plaza de Los Angeles, on Elton Avenue between 156th and 159th streets. The 26 three-family homes currently under construction will be joined by nine more next year. On a sister site, ground was broken last month for the mid-rise La Puerta de Vitalidad. **Larsen Shein Ginsberg + Magnusson Architects** designed these projects on a pro bono basis to help realize the goals of "We Stay/Nos Quedamos," the neighborhood community organization.

Also in the Bronx, between 180th and 181st streets, **Meltzer/Mandl Architects** recently completed the Hughes Avenue Apartments. The seven-story, 72-unit rental development features 36 studio apartments and 36 two-bedrooms ranging from 450 to 850 square feet. The architects kept costs down by exercising ingenuity in layouts and building form and by using inexpensive materials such as brick and colored Dry-vit. The 200-foot depth of the site even allowed them to create an outdoor courtyard.

In a recently completed renovation to house an art studio and private gallery, **Abelow Connors Sherman Architects** retained the historic character of a 17th Street loft. At the center of the project, a media room with a state-of-the-art audiovisual system is flanked by a painting studio to the north and living spaces to the south. The floor has been coated with an epoxy-urethane fin-

ish, while partitions are covered in joint compound (in lieu of paint) to establish an abstract three-dimensional gray background for the owner's paintings. Vistas to the paintings and to video monitors are seen through framed spaces.

Sydness Architects designed the renovation of the J.P. Morgan Investment Management Group's offices at 522 Fifth Avenue. (When Jeff Sydness was a principal at Swanke Hayden Connell, the project was awarded to that firm in an invited design competition between four New York architects. Sydness continued work on it after he formed his own firm.) The new design reduces the existing first-floor arcade to a three-bay entrance portico flanked by new retail spaces. The lobby has been relocated to the center of the building. Respecting the structural columns, the architects created an elliptical space to ease the flow from the entrance, through the lobby, to the elevator bank. Lower facades of the building have been re-clad in beige granite. Storefront windows are made of bronze.

For two full floors of the World Trade Center, **Cetra/Ruddy Incorporated** has been awarded a contract to design the national headquarters of Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, an institution-oriented securities broker. The modern, wood-paneled 97,800-square-foot space, with metal details and a limestone floor, will have an 80-person trading floor, state-of-the-art conference facilities, a cafeteria, and 200 workstations. Baseboards and ceiling moldings will be made from steel channels. A stainless-steel flying stair will descend to the lower level, where a floor-to-ceiling glass wall—sculpted

and frosted with an abstract pattern—will allow light into the reception area. Completion is expected in the fall of 1999.

Hillier New York, the architect of record for the Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton Tower on 57th Street (designed by French architect Christian de Portzamparc), has been retained to design the company's 108,000 square feet of office space spread over 24 floors. Each division will have a floor of its own with a distinctive lobby. Since the designers envisioned the building lying on its side, like a row of chic storefronts, every "retail store" will have an individual personality identifiable as you step off the elevator. Completion is scheduled for the end of September.

The DKNY world flagship boutique, designed by **Architectureproject**, is under construction at 655 Madison Avenue. The 17,000-square-foot project on three floors has retail space above and below a corner storefront (the space on the second level was once a Knoll showroom). A grand concrete stair will connect the three levels in an open interior volume 35 feet high. In December, the same firm completed the retailer's first U.S. location, a 4,800-square foot Donna Karan Collection boutique on two levels at the Americana Shopping Center, in Manhasset, Long Island. The central space there has a cantilevered steel staircase with limestone treads. As in the firm's DKNY stores worldwide, the perimeter walls and ceilings are painted black, and the interior wall panels hang from the ceiling, appearing to float; they are covered in gold leaf, armor-coat plaster with marble dust, and other elusive materials.