

POSTINGS

Habitat for Humanity in the Bronx

# Sweat Equity Helps to Create 13 Houses

Construction is under way on 150th Street between Tinton and Union Avenues in the South Bronx on 13 single-family three-bedroom row houses sponsored by Habitat for Humanity. The houses will be owned by families who already live in the neighborhood and whose income is between 55 and 80 percent of the area median, which is \$52,000 a year for a family of four.

The families, chosen from 45 applicants, must each give 600 hours of sweat equity in building the houses, according to Roland Lewis, executive director of the group's New York City chapter. The organization will provide a 30-year interest-free \$135,000 mortgage. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development sold the land to Habitat for a dollar per lot, a total of \$13.

While the Habitat chapter is financing the \$2 million project, donations from corporations and law firms have provided most of the funds for seven houses so far, at \$100,000 a house.

Maskow Masonry in Brooklyn is the project's contractor. Volunteers ranging from teenagers to retirees have been working on the homes, mainly putting up partitions and finishing interiors.

Jeffrey Murphy, the partner in charge of the



Andrew Deibel/Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects

The three-bedroom houses are on 150th Street between Tinton and Union Avenues.

project for Murphy Burnham & Buttrick Architects, which designed the houses, said, "We wanted a project that was well designed, dignified and enhanced the existing urban streetscape." To accomplish that, Mr. Murphy said, the fenced yards were raised 18 inches higher than the sidewalk to ensure that the front yard is perceived as a private space and prevent it from being used for parking.

To encourage families to mingle with neighbors, the architects designed oversized stoops and landings with built-in seating. The firm had designed planters for each front yard, but they were eliminated for budgetary limitations. So the 20-person architectural office plans to spend a day building and installing them.

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