



New Neighbor

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MERIT: HIGH-RISE

New Neighbor

Grant Park

Where do you expect to find great high-rises? The obvious places—New York, Chicago, San Francisco—probably come to mind. Now Urban Condos wants to add Minneapolis to the list, with the advent of its 27-story Grant



Park project.

But the company saw Grant Park as more than an attention-getting residential high-rise. Urban Condos, a joint venture between Minnesota's Opus Northwest and Apex Asset Management Corp., saw Grant Park as a chance to change the perception of the neglected Elliot Park neighborhood, located on the fringes of the Minneapolis' central business district.

Urban Condos built upon the architectural features of the surrounding blocks, stacking two-story homes and townhouses along the street edges. Along each major street, Grant Park has "front doors" to provide an urban edge.



Up high, Grant Park adds to the distinctive downtown Minneapolis skyline with stepped massing and multiple colors (brick and two types of limestone) and incorporating large cornices.

This new high-rise also offers all the amenities you might expect. Grant Park's perks include a fitness area and locker rooms, an indoor pool and hot tub, a board room and other common areas and a connected 510-car parking garage. For those who prefer pedaling to driving, Grant Park also offers multiple entryways and convenient bicycle storage for cyclists. —L.S.

Article continued on 2nd page below.



MERIT: LOW-RISE

Tropical Touch

Calypso Bay Apartments

Take just one glance at this tropical paradise, and you will long to sip a piña colada by the pool.

Clad in a colorful palette of green, blue, pink, and orange, the 469-unit Calypso Bay Apartments boldly brings the look and feel of the West Indies to Gretna, La., located just across the Mississippi River from New Orleans. Such a deluxe product was a first for this Gretna neighborhood. (Fortunately, the



project escaped major flood damage, but did sustain wind damage, after Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and Mississippi in late August.)

The West Indies theme was carried throughout the entire project, which was designed by Dallas-based Humphreys & Partners Architects. The apartment buildings—each with only seven units to create a single-family feel—feature metal roofs, Bahama shutters and large balconies. Rock planters, a waterfall, and covered cabana add a Caribbean touch to the pool area. Inside, the common area walls are



painted just as festively as the exterior. The billiards room, for instance, features an orange and green striped wall with a palm tree mural.

Competing to some extent with the single-family market, the apartment units offer many of the bells and whistles found in for-sale homes. Units feature stained concrete, stainless steel appliances, upgraded fixtures, and built-in computer stations. The project had reached 95 percent occupancy as of this summer. Here's hoping the project was able to weather the aftermath of the devastating storm. —R.Z.A.