



GRAND

Rollins Square

BOSTON

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HEN THE STATED GOAL IS to provide mixed-income housing, the end result often makes it clear just who lives where.

Not so with Rollins Square, an unusual 184-unit community in Boston's South End, where low-income tenants enjoy the same design standards and amenities as those who paid market-rate prices for their condominiums. "Our client wanted to raise the bar on standards for affordable housing," architect Christopher Hill says in reference to the Archdiocese of Boston, "and at the same time create a truly social invigorating community. We didn't create separate styles for separate categories of residents."

The Archdiocese Planning Office developed the project on land owned by the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The two-acre complex features a series of six-story buildings and four-story townhouses divided in half by a new interior street and park. Rollins Square straddles two distinct South End neighborhoods with very different building styles: a residential neighborhood with 19th-century brick homes, and a warehouse district where the large-scale buildings reflect their industrial use.

"We tried to create a bridge by designing housing that reflects both styles," says Hill. The townhouses, lower in scale, were placed in the middle of the blocks and have details such as cornices, lintels, and sills

that reflect the residential community. The taller buildings at the corners relate to the manufacturing neighbors and feature larger windows. Different shades and textures of brick are complemented by metal and precast elements to add visual interest. Some apartments feature French balconies or private patios.

Apartments range in size from one-bedroom flats to three-bedroom duplexes. Thirty-five percent were priced at market rates, 45 percent went to moderate-income residents, and 20 percent were for low-income tenants including formerly homeless people. The complex has a 277-space parking garage below grade and retail spaces at street level.—S.K.