



Living Ecologically Isn't Reserved for the Rich

By erecting a “green” building with moderate rents in New York, one company allows the most deprived to reduce their energy bills.



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Intervale Green, it's a complex of 128 apartments reserved for the poorest of people, but is also built with respect to the environment. The building erected in a difficult neighborhood of the Bronx in New York, is the latest baby from the Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo).

Above, the vegetated roofs top the brick building, while below, the walls of reinforced insulation and double paned windows form the structure. Elsewhere, a green ventilation system circulates clean air throughout the building, with the communal areas covered with recycled tiling and low wattage light bulbs. In the apartments themselves, the washing machines, refrigerators, and other domestic appliances are [sparing] in energy.

In all, the characteristics of Intervale Green should allow for a 43% reduction of energy consumption intended for heating the air and water, sufficiently saving 82,000 dollars (60,500 euros) the first year. In their more energy economical apartments, the inhabitants should be able to spend 30% less on their bills.

There is a thorn in the foot of the deprived because one third of the lodgings at Intervale Green are reserved for New York City's homeless and two-thirds are reserved for families living below the threshold of 60% of the local median income (fixed at 76,800 dollars or 56,600 in New York for a family of four). They will have the right to live in these green apartments in exchange for a moderate rent payment: between 780 dollars (575 euros) for a 2 bedroom apartment, to 1,089 dollars (803 euros) for a 4 bedroom apartment. Some rents are paid for certain families, thanks to lodging coupons furnished by the State.

Article Response:

In the Ile-de-France region [Paris and its suburbs], we already make low-rent buildings

May 24th, 9:15am, by a Low-Rent Building Organization Director

Overall, if I understand completely, the Americans are doing what we have been doing here in France. Recall: when you build a low-rent building in the region surrounding Paris, for example, you are obligated to receive grants from the region in order to make your construction certified by CERQUAL [Quality Lodging Certification], under “Housing and Environment” (roughly the transposition of HQE [High Environmental Quality] in the housing sector), which signifies that we respect the HQE, but also that we make a clean building site, that we inform the future residents in environmental matters, etc. The incoming tenants are all people reaching the requirements of the low-rent buildings (roughly the SMIC [Index-Linked Guaranteed Minimum Wage]) and a part of them is even reserved for people who earn less than 60% of this requirement. It’s been that way for several years in Paris and its surroundings. Thank you Americans....for copying us.