

Gold Medal Awards 2011

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Nomination-Berkowitz Development Group- Jeff Berkowitz

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Fifth and Alton, a 180,000 square foot vertical retail shopping center, which includes a 1,081 space municipally operated parking garage, was developed in an urban infill location on a 2.7 acre site, covering an entire city block at the entrance to Miami Beach. The project represents a new, urban prototype which addresses the specific needs of large-value retail tenants who have previously been limited to an ever expanding suburban landscape, while simultaneously integrating these uses into the higher residential and commercial densities of our inner city cores. This allows for higher efficiencies of land use, interaction of public and private transportation modes and previously nonexistent pedestrian, bicycle and scooter access to these value retailers.

Fifth and Alton was built upon a largely vacant parcel located at the intersection of Fifth Street and Alton Road, at the gateway to Miami Beach and has made a very significant impact on the community. The unsightly parcel welcomed national and international visitors traveling from downtown Miami to Miami Beach over the MacArthur Causeway and provides the first impression to 8 million annual visitors to the wildly popular Art Deco and club districts on South Beach. The site, which formerly housed a gas station and an automobile dealership service facility was declared a "Brownfield" as a result of petroleum contamination and required extensive remediation. The project delivered a badly needed grocery store (Publix) for South Beach residents to replace a nearby Winn-Dixie which had shuttered years earlier. The residents south of Fifth Street and on nearby Fisher, Star, Hibiscus and Palm Islands were forced to drive to another Publix located roughly 2 miles north along highly congested roads. Miami Beach was severely under-retailed. As a result of the project, residents and tourists will no longer be compelled to drive 45 minutes to shop at value oriented retailers. The project provided significant additional parking at a perimeter location and addressed a serious parking shortage on South Beach, by adding surplus parking with the intention of siphoning traffic off at the entrance to Miami Beach and minimizing congestion throughout South Beach. The project incorporates a large transit (currently bus) stop recessed into the building along Alton Road. Fifth and Alton created 500± permanent jobs in an Enterprise Zone and will generate millions in ad valorem tax revenues for the community. The project converted a blighted eyesore into an architectural gem and fulfilled a demonstrable demand for retail, grocery and parking facilities for the community.

The innovative design features the integration of major retail operational considerations into a receptive and extremely convenient consumer environment. The project contains three levels of retail, into which a six level parking garage is incorporated. The ground level accommodates liner retail along Fifth Street, a major artery into Miami Beach, and a large grocery store fronting the predominantly residential district on Sixth Street. The space in between the two ground level retail components contain an internalized service court, accommodating a total of 10 semi trucks and compactor pads, a 24 hour security office, generators, receiving areas and freight elevators dedicated to each elevated retail store. The second level contains parking and a pedestrian walkway art galleria for pedestrians to access the central elevator core from Fifth Street. The retail stores located on the third and fourth retail levels are serviced by parking fields located directly at each store entrance. Each retail level is flanked by two well-lit and secure parking levels. A central elevator core with large cart elevators makes access

to each of the six parking levels simple and convenient. Escalators facilitate pedestrian flow between the second and third retail floors. The entrance/exit to and from the parking garage is located on Lenox Avenue. Cars continue up through an internal speed ramps to each of the six parking levels. The ultimate result is a retail project which is simple to navigate and park, making access to the retail stores extremely convenient and comfortable for both the pedestrian and vehicular customers, who can park securely out of the tropical rain, heat and humidity and who are able to easily access all of the stores within a very short walking distance, without having to continually move their cars.

Fifth & Alton has been warmly embraced by South Beach residents, delighted with their new supermarket and with local shopping opportunities without having to drive 45 minutes to comparable stores. Visitors to Miami Beach cannot fail to miss the world-class architectural design and are welcomed by a 35 foot tall Romero Britto sculpture of palm trees and a beach ball. Fifth and Alton (Berkowitz Development Group) a Gold Medal Award because of its visionary and creative design, the project's execution and implementation, its positive impact within the community and because of the inordinate number of potentially insurmountable obstacles which had to be overcome over an eight-year period to become a spectacular reality in an impossible economy.

Fifth and Alton is a sustainable model for urban core redevelopment and will be widely studied as an effective and efficient solution for integrating high density consumer-convenient retail into the inner city core. One true test of the success of this building's innovative design and urban context is its financial viability and success. This Project was conceived, designed and developed during one of the most tumultuous construction and economic times that we have experienced since The Great Depression; and, yet, the Project is a resounding success for its developers, retailers and for the community it was designed to service.