

North Manhattan Construction to complete \$6m renovation project



The Rocky Mount Baptist Church

planned on the lower floors.

The project consists of two architecture firms working together to construct the cohesive development. Heading up the church structure portion are Oliver Franklin and partner George Jones of Johnson Jones Architects Planners, Inc. Mario Canteros, the principal for Mario A. Canteros Architect, P.C., is responsible for the residential portion of the project. "The idea of merging an ecclesiastical structure with a residential, urban structure has its unique challenges," Canteros says. "We believe this solution will provide the initial path to a harmonious relationship that will enhance the neighborhood beyond the original vision."

The Rocky Mount Baptist Church congregation is about to get a new, modern church, thousands of square feet of community space and an apartment complex filled with potential new members thanks to a unique real estate deal they struck with North Manhattan Construction Corporation, a third-generation development and construction company based in Manhattan.

Starting this fall, North Manhattan will raze the existing church (a 5,000 s/f, one-story building), located at 37-41 Hillside Ave. in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan, and build a 15,000 s/f modern house of worship on the same site. In addition, the development company will create 100,000 s/f of rental housing in back of the property.

Led by Reverend Eugene Hudson, Rocky Mount Baptist Church - and its 20,000 s/f lot on Hillside Avenue - has appreciated to \$6 million in value, skyrocketing from its original purchase price of \$140,000 in 1980. Originally used as a senior citizen center, the 45 year old building - with an outdated boiler system and windows that were in disrepair - was in severe need of a renovation, one which the church could not afford. "North Manhattan Construction offered us the best deal, beating out three other development companies," said Hudson. In addition to building a new church, North Manhattan's proposal also gave back to the community: of the 75 rental units in the 16-story residential complex, 20% will be reserved for affordable housing with an additional 11,000 s/f of community facility space