

Lenox Terrace

Individual Landmark

470-484 Lenox Avenue



Lenox Terrace Apartments. Photo: Lorraine Colbert

Developed on a 15-acre parcel assembled by Guyanese American Dr. Godfrey Nurse, a Harlem Hospital surgeon, Lenox Terrace was designed by S. J. Kessler and Sons, who also designed Manhattan's Park West Village. Politicians, local leaders, and those who could afford a more expensive Harlem address welcomed the 1958 completion of the six-building housing complex, which, while rivaling the scale of Harlem's low-income housing projects, provided a new level of services and comfort to high-rise living in Harlem.

With the help of NYC urban planner Robert Moses, real estate developer Robert Olnick displaced Dr. Nurse to become the sponsor of Lenox Terrace, one of the first urban renewal projects built in Harlem. The project was renamed from Godfrey Nurse Houses to Lenox Terrace, and its construction consisted of 1,716 apartments and five shopping centers. This development was a major step forward in the plan to rebuild and recast the Harlem "slum."

Lenox Terrace is still recognized as one of Harlem's most desirable addresses, and was once home to painter Romare Bearden, former Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton,

Brooklyn Dodgers phenomenon Roy Campanella, noted jazz musicians Miles Davis and Charles Mingus, and comedians Jackie "Moms" Mabley and Nipsey Russell. Currently, former Congressman Charles B. Rangel and former NYS Governor David Paterson are residents, along with Latin Jazz band leader Bobby Sanabria, and Tony Award winner Lillias White.