Center for Architecture presents exhibition on plans for the Domino Sugar Refinery in Brooklyn

“The New Domino” spotlight exhibition, featuring the architectural plans for the redevelopment of the Domino Sugar Refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, a 2,200 unit complex developed by CPC Resources, Inc., and designed by Rafael Viñoly Architects, will be on view at the Center for Architecture April 9-May 3.

Press are invited to a Press Reception, Tuesday, April 13, 12 noon, with participants from CPCR, Rafael Viñoly Architects and the Center for Architecture, and to a Public Presentation of plans with Rafael Viñoly, FAIA, Thursday, April 22, 6-8pm. Both events at the Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, NYC 10012. To RSVP to these events, or for press images, please contact Emily Nemens at 212-358-6126 or enemens@aiany.org

NEW YORK CITY, April 8, 2010 – The future of the Domino Sugar site, the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, and New York’s waterfront will be considered this month at the Center for Architecture through an exhibition and program about “The New Domino.” Rafael Viñoly Architects has designed a plan to remake the 125-year-old industrial complex into an 11.2 acre, mixed-income residential and mixed-use development. The exhibition, the latest in the Center for Architecture’s Helfand Spotlight Series of month-long exhibitions that focus on current design issues in New York, will be on view April 9-May 3, with a public presentation of the master plan by architect Rafael Viñoly, FAIA, at 6pm, April 22.

“The New Domino,” proposed by CPC Resources, Inc., will create a significant amount of affordable housing and public space in the north Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg. Rafael Viñoly, FAIA, said, “The New Domino’s master plan seamlessly integrates the waterfront park into the urban public realm, welcoming residents and non-residents alike through direct pedestrian extensions of the Williamsburg street grid. Set back from the water’s edge, four residential complexes break the standard slab typology into elements of varying heights and slender proportions, creating unparalleled views of the City.”

The Domino Sugar Refinery, its earliest structures built in 1884 by the Havemeyers and Elder Refinery, is thought to have once been the largest sugar refinery in the world, and was in continuous operation for over a century before closing in 2004. The 11.2-acre waterfront site was purchased by The Refinery
LLC, which is managed by the CPC Resources, Inc., who commissioned Rafael Viñoly Architects to develop a master plan for the East River waterfront site. “The New Domino exhibition is a sweetener to a substantial discussion of the merits of the project, among the design community and New Yorkers,” said Rick Bell, FAIA, Executive Director of the Center for Architecture and AIANY. “The show allows people in favor of and those opposed to some aspects of the project to see what the development means for the neighborhood and for New York.”

As plans for the new Domino move forward, it has undergone several rounds of city regulatory review. At the center of the site, the three-building Refinery complex was landmarked in 2007 by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, an action supported by the developer. The Refinery’s restoration plan, developed by Beyer Blinder Belle LLP, includes saving the external walls, but entirely dismantling and rebuilding the severely dilapidated internal structure, and removing an antiquated network of sugar refining mechanical systems. It was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 2008. In a split vote in March 2010, Brooklyn’s Community Board 1 issued a “No with Modifications” recommendation on the project, despite the plan’s inclusion of 660 affordable housing units and four acres of new public open space, including a ¼ mile long waterfront esplanade. The project is now with the Brooklyn Borough President, and will then go to the New York City Planning Commission for review. The fate of the development will likely be determined at the City Council this summer.

Explained AIANY President Anthony Schirripa, FAIA, IIDA, “The New Domino brings up issues of density, affordable housing, access to the waterfront, open spaces, and adaptive reuse. It’s a rare occasion that these five important concerns come together at one site. I hope our exhibition and program with the architect illuminates these issues for the design community and the public.”

Related Program • Thursday, April 22, 2010 • 6 pm
Project Presentation by Rafael Viñoly, FAIA
Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Place, New York City, 10012
Admission: Free for AIANY members; $10 for nonmembers
Rafael Viñoly, FAIA, will present The New Domino master plan. He will discuss the complete design and also will explain the master plan design history along with the parallel evolution of the development and preservation objectives.

The New Domino is presented as part of the Margaret Helfand Spotlight Series. Margaret Helfand was pivotal in establishing the Center for Architecture and championing its mission of public outreach and design literacy for all.

The Center for Architecture is a destination for all interested in the built environment. It is home to the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter and the Center for Architecture Foundation, vibrant nonprofit organizations that provide resources to both the public and building industry professionals. Through exhibitions, programs, and special events, the Center aims to improve the quality and sustainability of the built environment, foster exchange between the design, construction, and real estate communities, and encourage collaborations across the city and globe. The Center also celebrates New York’s vibrant architecture, explores its urban fabric, shares community resources, and provides opportunities for scholarship. As the city’s leading cultural institution focusing on architecture, the Center drives positive change through the power of design. For more information, please visit www.aiany.org.