

URBY live livelier.

**press story and information on the development of the new housing brand URBY
and the URBY Staten Island project**

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URBY – THE BRAND

In the past decades, urban life has changed beyond recognition. As a result of shifting values and new technological possibilities, our lives today revolve more around experience than possession. Thanks to technology, we can turn any public space into a mobile office, drive cars without owning them and connect to everyone and everything at any time. Residential development however, is struggling to keep up with the changing demands of the modern city dweller. As rents go up and value for money falls behind, the urban rental offer is rapidly losing its appeal to young potentials and the middle class.

That's where Urby comes in. Built from the ground up with the needs of contemporary urban citizens in mind, Urby is a unique residential concept that offers unprecedented value for money and a truly connected living experience.

Urby stands for competitively priced rental housing with a strong focus on experience and community. The apartments – available in S, M and L – are compact in size, resulting in lower monthly rates. At the same time, they feel larger than they are thanks to the clever use of the available square footage and bright lighting plans. Sliding doors between rooms further increase the sense of space, whilst large windows let in abundant daylight and offer panoramic views. With plenty of built-in storage space, lighting, fully equipped kitchen and bathroom, plus pre-installed Wi-Fi, Urby apartments set a new standard in ready-to-move-in rental housing.

Urby buildings have been designed to create natural opportunities for neighbours to meet and interact. Every building is entered through a public accessible, house-shaped entrance café that gives anyone walking through the door an instant feeling of coming home. Once inside, all areas are seamlessly connected. The numerous communal resident spaces include a kitchen, a gym, gardens, a pool and even an urban farm. The communal spaces are actively programmed. An in-residence chef cooks several days a week and offers cooking lessons in the communal kitchen. On properties that feature an urban farm, such as Urby Staten Island, residents can join the in-house farmer in growing their own vegetables for dinner. Available services can include anything from a personal trainer to a business coach. It all depends on the local needs and demographics of the residents.

Being a residential concept for the connected age, Urby has a digital side as well. But one that always serves the analogue purpose of interacting with other residents in real life. Via the Urby app, residents can access the program of the communal activities, enjoy keyless entry to their apartments, use the smart mail and package systems and a variety of local services. Other amenities include shared cars, communal bicycles and filtered water stations that serve as natural meeting points and promote the use of tap water over bottled water.

The architectural design of the properties reflects the organic nature of the Urby brand, focusing on flexibility, space and connection. Constantly in motion, tailored to fit the neighbourhood and responsive to changes in modern urban life, Urby is the first real estate concept that isn't set in stone.

Urby. Live livelier.

URBY – DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

Every day, 180,000 people around the world move to the city. And all those people need a place to live. But with rising demand comes rising rent, making it virtually impossible for young potentials and the middle class to find rental housing that is not only affordable, but also caters to the needs of the modern urban citizen. In a time characterised by flexibility, community and sustainability, the available rental-housing increasingly fails to meet modern-day demands.

And so in 2009, Concrete was approached by Ironstate to develop a better rental-housing product for New York's densely populated areas. 'Better' in this context was defined as a product that more adequately meets the needs of the modern urban resident, offers higher value for the money and facilitates a more positive way of living. Concrete and Ironstate joined forces and before long, Urby was born. A unique residential concept that offers premium value at sub-premium rates and a truly connected living experience.

Urby is a holistic housing concept that offers residents much more than living quarters. That said, Concrete started out with focusing on the essence: the apartments. The design team created Small (studio), Medium (one-bedroom) and Large (two-bedroom) units. In order to test functionality, flow and setup, several mock-up apartments were built in a Jersey warehouse. In 2012, Concrete and Ironstate completed a 48-unit building in Jersey City and started renting the apartments out to gauge market response and collect user feedback. Three apartments have been kept on for testing purposes to this day, in order to constantly fine-tune layouts, finishes and fixtures. Meanwhile in 2011, Concrete started working on the Urby Staten Island project, applying the learnings from the test building to the first official Urby building.

The Urby Staten Island project consists of more than 900 rental apartments, 571 of which have been completed in phase 1. This fall, construction begins on the remaining 340 apartments. Next to Staten Island Urby will be present in other areas close to the city as well. End of the year the 69 story tower of Urby Jersey City with 763 apartments will open, while construction of Urby Harrison (450 apartments) is on it's way and Urby Stamford will start construction in fall. Other sites in and around New York are currently under design investigation

URBY STATEN ISLAND - DESIGN STORY

The forgotten borough

Staten Island is New York's least populated and most overlooked borough. But things are slowly coming around. The number of ferry rides to Manhattan will soon go up and the city has started to develop the northeast shore into a public esplanade, featuring the world's largest Ferris wheel as its main attraction. In terms of housing, the Urby Staten Island property is the borough's largest residential development project in years. The project is located in the Stapleton area on the northeast shore of Staten Island, about a mile south of the ferry station that connects the neighbourhood to Manhattan. The building is located right next to the Stapleton subway station on Front Street and overlooks the Upper New York Bay with views of downtown Manhattan in the distance.

Changing the face of the neighbourhood

Complying with local regulations, the buildings are four and five stories tall respectively and consist of retail and residential units on top of a semi-underground parking garage. The property is split in two by the Navy Pier Court. This public street connects the existing adjacent residential neighbourhood with the Urby site and the waterfront. Navy Pier Court forms the heart of the property, featuring carefully selected retail and restaurant spaces to reinvigorate this forgotten part of town. Outdoor seating facilities that include a partly covered living room turns this public area into an alluring hangout for residents and non-residents alike.

The buildings are set up as two large U-shaped structures, opening up unobstructed views of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the impressive Verrazano Bridge from most of the apartments. Both buildings come with large landscaped areas that overlook the Upper Bay. The metal and glass warehouse-type of architecture pays homage to the area's former naval purpose. The main building's architectural louvers and windows are made of dark metal, alternated by silver windows to add a playful rhythm to the straightforward facades. The courtyard building features a silver coloured metal and is architecturally divided into smaller building sections to match with the scale of the courtyard.

Navy Pier Court is also where the main entrances to the building are situated. Two house-shaped wooden arches on both sides of the street mark the unmistakable entrances, creating an instant feeling of coming home. Both entrances lead to a public assembly first; the entrance café on one side and a Bodega on the other. The communal residents-only areas are located behind the café and Bodega.

Connecting the dots

The public areas form the social heart of all Urby properties. Designed for social interaction between residents, they create natural opportunities for neighbours to meet. The Zebra - a pedestrian crossing type of pattern painted on the street and paved in the courtyard flooring - draws a straight line over the full length of the property, connecting all public and communal spaces. The Zebra essentially symbolises what Urby is all about: connecting communities and residents.

Welcome home

Instead of a traditional lobby with an ordinary doorman, Urby Staten Island has an entrance café with its very own barista who welcomes residents and visitors with a delicious cup of coffee. The café is run by Coffeed; a local franchise that serves coffee, pastries and small dishes as well as wine and locally brewed beer. The entrance café is the perfect place to start the day or unwind on the way home. A large marble bar is the centrepiece of the double-height space that stretches from the street in the front to the courtyard in the back. In the front, café seating with small tables and chairs, a communal table and window seating under wooden arches overlook the street. Newspapers, magazines and board games are available on the tables and shelves between the arches. In the back, the floor is elevated, accommodating a lounge area under wooden arches that connect with the courtyard. Two large open

cabinets on both sides of the bar are filled with art, accessories and books. Above the bar, an open mezzanine floor leads from the elevators to one of the building's residential areas. These residents-only areas overlook the café below and feature tables to work at, lounge seating, games and a foosball table.

Stay in. Work out.

The Zebra continues outside across the communal landscaped courtyard, connecting the café with the outdoor facilities, the entrance of the courtyard building and ultimately the gym. The gym is located in a two-storey glass space that protrudes from the main building. A void over the full width of the facility and a large open staircase connects both floors. The gym has areas for cardio, weights and yoga. Gymnastic rings, climbing racks and vintage gym equipment give this modern-day gym an old-school feel.

What's for dinner?

Across the street lies the entrance to the second part of the building, the Bodega. The Bodega is a convenience store that's clearly visible from the street within the house-shaped arches. Its large glazed-door fridges are filled with locally brewed beers, while open fridge cases integrated in the display tables display a wide variety of cheese. Fresh produce from Urby's own farm and other local suppliers are presented in open crates. There's also a machine that dispenses unpackaged nuts and dry fruits in order to avoid unnecessary packaging waste.

Behind the Bodega lies the residents-only area, starting with the communal kitchen. Like other communal Urby spaces, the kitchen too is situated under wooden arches and faces an outdoor terrace. During phase two, the terrace will be transformed into a landscaped courtyard. The kitchen is decked out with professional cooking equipment that is organized around a large kitchen table made of wood from chopping blocks. The kitchen area features a communal table and lounge seating along the windows overlooking the courtyard. With features such as a classic black-white blocked floor, the kitchen is designed to feel like your grandmother's kitchen. Somewhere you always feel at home and there's always plenty of food. The resident chef is Brendan Costello. Brendan lives in the building and mans the kitchen six days a week. The kitchen is actively programmed with cooking classes, food events and musical performances.

All about convenience

Residents enter the buildings either via the entrance café or through the Bodega. Behind both entrances lies an open residents-only area that provides access to the elevators and corridors leading to the apartments. This is also where the mailboxes and package lockers are located. This area is all about service, with notice boards containing local community programming and a mailroom table with office stationary to pack or unwrap packages or mail. Next to the mailroom table is a large custom-made marble water fountain that provides filtered tap water, saving residents from having to buy – and throw out - tons of plastic bottles. Every resident leaving or entering the building passes by this iconic element, reminiscent of fountains that in the olden days were typically found on central town squares.

Life made easy

Urby residents have a range of technological innovations at their disposal to make their lives easier. For instance, they can choose to receive notifications via the Urby app (in development) when a package has arrived for them, as well as an access code for the locker in which the package is stored. Through the keyless entry system, residents can unlock their doors with their phones or give friends and delivery services temporary access to their apartments. Currently Urby is in talks with Zip-Car to have several electric cars stationed in the parking for residents to use. Urby offers at least one bicycle parking spot per apartment and residents can hop on one of the communal Urby bikes at any time.

The great urban outdoors

The space between the U-shaped building serves as a landscaped communal courtyard. Built on top of the semi-submerged parking garage, the courtyard is elevated above ground level, offering beautiful views of the adjacent public esplanade and the Upper Bay. The Zebra crosses the full length of the courtyard, connecting the entrance café with the entrance of the courtyard building and the gym. Terrace seating on the Zebra lines the café, together with large pots and plants to create an intimate setting. Elsewhere in the gardens, large weathering steel planters filled with wild flowers, grasses and small trees form seating corners and relaxing areas with a fire pit. Lawn areas provide residents with a place to picnic. By the waterside, a wooden pool deck rises above the landscape with seating, deck chairs and a large pool, overlooking the New York Upper Bay.

At the other end of the courtyard lies the 5,000 sq ft urban farm, run by the first ever in-residence farmers in the US, Zaro Bates and Asher Landes. Produce from the farm is used by the residents themselves, served in the kitchen or sold in the Bodega. The farm comes with a small greenhouse and large picnic tables for shared dining. Residents are welcome to help grow their own herbs and vegetables. Last but not least, there are several beehives on the roof that produce fresh Urby honey.

The writing on the wall

Photographer Ewout Huibers was commissioned to shoot hundreds of house number signs. The images were compiled in a light box collage to indicate the apartment numbers in the corridors. Huibers also shot the urban walls that are printed on the wallpaper decorating the elevator lobbies. The floor numbers were spray-painted on by a graffiti artist. Bikes, planters, NEON signs and large graffiti murals in the parking garage further add to the urban character of the building, bringing home the energy of the city.

THE APARTMENTS

Smart use of space

All Urby apartments feel larger than they are as a result of smart use of the available space. Despite being compact, the units are built with an optimal flow and spatial balance in mind. Sliding doors between connecting spaces let residents fully open up the apartment and experience its full size and sense of space. All apartments boast windows across the full width of the units. Combined with a straightforward design and use of light colours, the large windows bring daylight and a sense of spaciousness deep into the apartments, while at the same time offering panoramic views.

A new level of turnkey

Urby apartments are constructed in such a way that they're ready for residents to move in. All spaces are finished with durable materials, including wooden floors in living room and bedroom areas. The units come with a complete and operational lighting plan that has been specifically designed to match the overall look and feel of the apartments. Bespoke furniture pieces have been installed, such as extra deep windowsills with bookshelves underneath that double as a desk or seat by the window. Window blinds, built-in wardrobes and storage spaces in the bedrooms, as well as fully equipped tailor-made kitchens and bathrooms, including a washer/dryer are ready for immediate use. The apartments also come with pre-installed Wi-Fi, completing the ready-to-move-in package.

Different shapes and sizes

The S-units are studio apartments measuring approximately 380-420 SqFt. While in most studio apartments the only place for the bed is in the living room, the S-units come with a small alcove space in the entrance area that offers enough room for a double bed. As a result, there's more space in the living room to actually live in, essentially turning the apartment into a 1-bedroom rather than a studio.

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The 530-560 SqFt M-units are set up with sliding doors between areas. When opened, all areas of the apartment are connected, allowing residents to circle the unit around the kitchen block in the middle of the apartment. By removing the vanity from the bathroom and placing it in the hallway that comes with built-in cabinetry with full-length mirrors, the hallway doubles as a dressing area.

The 2-bedroom L-units measure 760 SqFt. They're positioned on the corners of the buildings as to make optimal use of the façade perimeter. The living room with built-in kitchen is placed right on the corner of the unit, providing stunning views in two directions. Wall-to-wall windows run along both sides of the room. The two bedrooms are situated on both ends of the living room. The sliding doors between the living room and bedrooms are positioned on the window side. So when the doors are open, the windows and sills from the living room extend into the bedrooms, giving off a sensation of abundant space and light.

The Urby brand and concept have been created by Ironstate development in collaboration with Concrete. Concrete is responsible for all of Urby's design - from the architecture of the building to all of its interiors, urban landscape and styling. Conceived with the ever-changing needs of the contemporary urban citizen in mind, Urby is a total and dynamic living experience that provides the perfect haven for those embracing everything the city has to offer.

URBY STATEN ISLAND - PROJECT INFORMATION

project: **URBY staten island**
client: ironstate development, hoboken, USA
concept: ironstate (david barry) and concrete

architecture, interior and landscape design: **concrete**
office address: oudezijds achterburgwal 78a – 1012 dr
city: amsterdam, the netherlands (NL)
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website: www.concreteamsterdam.nl

project location:

address: Navy Pier Court, Staten Island
city: New York - USA
e-mail: info@urby.com
website: www.urby.com

Start design: 2011
Opening: July 2016

project facts:

- 571 apartments divided by S (studio), M (1 bedroom) and L (2 bedroom) apartments
- parking garage with 310 spaces
- 30.000 Sq Ft retail area
- Public spaces: entrance café and Bodega store
- Communal spaces: communal kitchen, mezzanine living room area, gym
- Landscaped gardens with Pool deck, Play area, Urban Farm and different seating facilities

design firms:

project team concrete: Erikjan Vermeulen - Rob Wagemans
Cindy Wouters - Matthijs Hombergen
Jolijn Vonk - Jesse Nolte - Sofie Ruytenberg
Ana Bissau Pereira - Eva Stekelenburg - Melanie Knuewer
Johanna Zyschki - Robert Schellekens - Kayla Lee
executive architect: Minno & Wasko, Lambertville, USA
executive landscape architect: Melillo & Bauer, Brielle, USA
structural engineer: Minno & Wasko, Lambertville, USA
MEP engineer: GEA, New York, USA
Lighting consultant: Beam Ltd, Glenside, USA
Marketing collaterals: Heavenly, London/New York

contractors:

General Contractor: AJD construction Co, Leonardo, USA
Electrical contractor: Top Shelf electric, Iselin, USA
Mechanical contractor: Haddad Plumbing & Mechanical, Newark, USA
landscape / planting contractor: Twin Resources, Eatontown, USA
Shopfitter public and communal spaces: Roord Interior works, Amsterdam, NL
delivery loose furniture: OfficeDock, Amsterdam, NL

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bespoke elements:

Bespoke furniture:	design by concrete execution by Roord, Amsterdam, NL
Lighting apartments:	design by concrete execution by Frandsen Lighting, Denmark
Memoboard apartments: housenumber lighting:	design and execution by Droog, Amsterdam, NL design by concrete + photography by Ewout Huibers execution by Frandsen Lighting, Denmark
Exterior lightbox signage:	design by concrete execution by Let There Be Neon, New York, USA
Marble filtered water fountain:	design by concrete execution by Tomcap Engineering
Bespoke Carpets cafe:	design by concrete execution by Desso, NL
Styling public spaces: URBY bike:	concrete with Ironstate vanMoof

Loose furniture in public and communal spaces:

Design House Stockholm, Billiani, Emeco, Fermob, Muuto, Hay, &tradition, Thonet, Moooi, Knoll, Ercol, Fritz-Hanssen, Modernica/Hans Wegner Papa Bear, Zeitraum, Vitra, Softline, Zuiver, Carl Hansen, Funn Juhl, Droog, Erik Jorgensen, Arco, Treku and many Vintage Pieces

Loose and Pendent lighting in public and communal spaces:

Tom Dixon, Zero, Cappellini, Moooi, Foscarini, &tradition, Muuto, Gubi, Frederik Roije, Anglepoise, Vitra, Ikea, Lampe Grass

Carpets in public and communal spaces:

Moooi, Carpetsign, van Besouw

Exterior loose furniture en lighting:

Streetlife, Fermob, Extremis, Droog, Emu, Acapulco, Jennifer Newman, Vestre, Fat Boy, Kul Design lighting, Marset lighting

ABOUT CONCRETE

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in short there are no problems, only solutions.
services concrete builds identities in the 3rd dimension
a multi-disciplinary design firm that works from urban planning till interior design,
from architecture to graphic design.
projects: among many others: citizenM hotels worldwide, supperclub worldwide, rituals stores worldwide,
w hotels london + verbier, zoku lofts

CONCRETE LIKES TO LET THE WORK DO THE TALKING...

concrete develops concepts.

We develop them in architecture, interior design, urban development and brand development.

concrete unites people. We work with a team of 43 multidisciplinary creatives to help businesses and institutions.

concrete loves provoking, confusing, philosophizing, scale models, haute cuisine, burgers, and (most of all) shattering dogmas.

concrete provides solutions. No grand theories or abstract ideas. Just things that work.

concrete likes to let the work do the talking.

concrete is a generation.

We live in the air and on the move. Our offices are hotel rooms, and our meetings are everywhere. We're flexible and multidisciplinary. We're a generation where high and low culture mix, the rough with the chic. We're young at heart: non-traditionalists with an eye for sketches as well as details, folk who value intuition and passion. We're professionals without the suits, making things both beautiful and sustainable. Design that lasts, that looks good and does good.

concrete makes a difference.

concrete thrives by redefining what's come before. We've developed new categories in hotels and restaurants, retail, even pharmacies. We believe that change happens in unexpected moments. It also appears when cultures and concepts collide, which is why we love to work internationally. Doing something new doesn't have to be difficult. Often, it's about following your intuition and simplifying, a process that strips a concept down to its essence.

concrete works hard and travels harder.

We're a company where nobody has a car, and everybody commutes by bike. And when we're not on bikes, we're in planes. concrete has worked everywhere from the U.S. to Asia. Travel is good for our brains: the more you travel, the more ideas you get. Every country we visit, every city, helps generate new concepts, new angles, new ways of looking. At concrete, we're full-on dedicated global nomads, playing everywhere.

concrete believes that functionality has no style.

Our philosophy is no philosophy. Instead, we reinvent ourselves, adapting according to every project's needs. After all, what works in one country or for one client doesn't work for another. Our goal is to create aesthetically pleasing buildings and interiors that work, that function. Put another way, we create commercially applied functional art (though we're not artists.) And you can see this attitude throughout our process, from the presentation to the bricks to the guest experience.