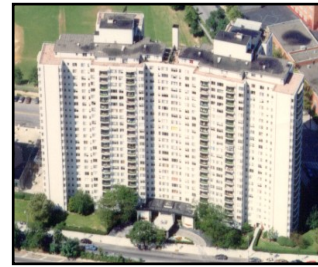




...If you've got a rich
imagination, give it a whirl,
give it a try..."
—Frank Loesser



The Whitehall WHIRL



3333 Henry Hudson Parkway
Riverdale, NY 10463

AN INFORMAL NEWSLETTER FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE WHITEHALL
GREEN ROOF SPECIAL EDITION JUNE 22, 2017 ISSUE No. 43

FROM THIS...
"Blank Page"
January 2016



...TO THIS
Nearing Completion
June 2017



THE GREEN ROOF: THE STORY

For those who want to keep score, the 2015 signing of a long-term lease for the school annex with Bright Horizons, a worldwide leader in early childhood education and daycare facilities, was the immediate precipitating factor, the triggering event, that resulted in The Whitehall's 30,000 sq. ft. Green Roof, which celebrates its official grand opening on Thursday, June 22, 2017.

That's because the 15-year lease with Bright Horizons as a brand new tenant, after many years of shorter-term leases with the NYC Board of Education's School Construction Authority, specified a roof protected by a double-layer waterproofing membrane under manufacturer's warranty. The Whitehall school annex occupies a 13,000 sq. ft. area directly under the total 30,000 sq. ft. slab of concrete referred to as "the pool deck." Moreover, all of the 29 cabanas that were installed atop the old pool deck sat directly above the school annex portion of the roof. The full slab extended outside the atrium enclosure of the health club pool, and covered the Independence Ave. ground-floor level of the health club and the ground-floor and other levels of the Whitehall garage, in addition to the entire school annex.

Tests showed the membrane deterioration

Engineering probes in several areas of the old pool deck determined that the original membrane under the 6" concrete slab that was part of the original building construction in 1970, had substantially deteriorated and was no longer able to prevent water penetration into any of the areas directly below the concrete deck. The concrete slab itself had degraded and had many cracks allowing rainwater and melting snow to seep through the roof. And those 29 brick cabanas plopped down atop the concrete deck, each including plumbing that had similarly deteriorated over nearly 50 years represented 29 additional potential sources of leaks.

Prior to the new lease signing with Bright Horizons, the Board of Directors and building management had undertaken years of five and six-figure temporary repairs and patches on the pool deck to help minimize water penetration and damage. But if

these quick fixes were temporary solutions, it was always understood that one day, The Whitehall would have to bite the bullet and entirely demolish the old pool deck, including the cabanas, in order to put down new layers of waterproofing membrane and insulation. And everyone knew that this would be a job running into the millions.

Importantly, the lease with Bright Horizons afforded the new tenant several months to completely reconstruct the interior of the facility before officially opening. This in turn provided the perfect space of time. The Whitehall needed to simultaneously undertake the noisy, dusty work of demolishing the old concrete slab of the pool deck while the school facility beneath was not occupied. It is hard to envision a more ideal scenario for accomplishing the work that needed to be done,



The old: A sea of aging concrete baking in the sun, and the only shade provided by a single canvas canopy.

New roof = new mortgage

So, if the lease signing with Bright Horizons provided the impetus for demolishing and replacing the pool deck, the Board's decision to refinance The Whitehall's underlying mortgages and line of credit was the enabling factor, the essential financial side of the equation, that generated the funds required for this major expense while at the same

time minimizing the burden on the shareholders.

The new primary mortgage secured from Astoria Bank in 2015 provided enough funds over the total required to simply retire the existing mortgage and line of credit to yield a capital reserve fund of several million dollars. This was enough to pay for the demolition and reconstruction of the pool deck as a green roof, along with other enhancements to the area, including a long-sought handicapped lift up to the pool deck level, and two new handicapped accessible bathrooms on the pool deck level.

And, because the new mortgage was secured at much lower interest rates than the prior mortgages, the monthly and annual debt service costs to The Whitehall, despite the higher total amount of the mortgage, has been significantly reduced vs. the existing mortgage. The Whitehall has thus been able to pay for this extensive project without any shareholder assessment or maintenance increase, and still have funds remaining for additional capital projects in the future. It's a classic win-win. w

THE GREEN ROOF: THE VISION

In 2015, when the lease with Bright Horizons for the school annex was finally signed, sealed and delivered, the Board of Directors and building management knew that the first order of business was the complete demolition of the pool deck, including the 29 cabanas at the south end, and replacement of the old, deteriorated waterproofing membrane beneath with a brand new warranty-protected membrane installation that would eliminate leaks, and thus literally fulfill one of The Whitehall's primary obligations to the new lessee.

But, at the same time, the building faced a major decision: Should the pool deck simply be reconstructed as it formerly was, with a new concrete slab atop a new leak-proof membrane, and with new cabanas constructed in strict accordance with building codes? Or, could we seize the moment and take this golden opportunity to do something altogether transformative...something that would propel The Whitehall as a residential building into the realm of the extraordinary?

That "something" was the re-imagining and re-designing of this 2/3 acre newly-cleared space as the Green Roof that is about to officially open. The decision was facilitated by many factors including refinancing of the mortgage to generate a substantial cash reserve for major capital projects. But there was also this: preliminary estimates put the reconstruction of 29 all-new cabanas at over \$1,000,000 just for that component. It seemed like an awful lot of money for just 29 residents or club members, and the rental income that would be generated could never offset that cost in any kind of reasonable time frame.

But the Board's decision, and it was a unanimous one, was based on a lot more than hard numbers. For example, General Manager Gene Staudt had, in 2005, his first year at The Whitehall, attended a major seminar on "green roofs and rooftop gardens" (see story on page 7), and he says that he decided right then and there that The Whitehall's concrete pool deck was a perfect candidate for this order of magnitude improvement. He just had to wait for the right moment.

Sponsor-appointed Director Larry Goldberg had first-hand experience with green roofs at other buildings in the Ogden Cap Properties portfolio in Manhattan, and was convinced early on that The Whitehall's 30,000 sq. ft. of open pool deck space had to emerge like a butterfly from a cocoon as a rooftop park that would function as an amenity not just for health club members, but for all residents of The Whitehall as well.



The new: Same angle, but the concrete is gone. Now it's trees, planters, shady pergolas and flowing water.

Even before the final vote to go ahead, Board members Irma Greene and Len Daykin, along with Landscape Committee Chairperson Emily Daykin, joined with Gene Staudt to spend the better part of a day walking the entire length of the High Line park in Manhattan, taking pictures, and understanding the myriad ways that this unique mile-long natural environment, constructed atop an abandoned elevated freight railway in Manhattan's old meat-packing district, was being utilized. More than anything else, the group saw the dynamic relationship between this green space, just one story up from the street, and the people and traffic along the city streets below. It was easy to draw an analogy between the High Line, and the vision of a Whitehall green roof, both at a similar altitude, and both in contact with, and yet apart from, the busy cityscape just below.



For sure, the concept of green roofs, or rooftop gardens, is not something new. A story in The New York Times nearly 100 years ago, in July 1924 (see inset above), devoted a full-page to the emergence of landscaped gardens atop roofs and terraces in private apartment residences in New York City. Today, perhaps influenced

by the success of the High Line, green roofs are all the rage. Just look up at the high rise apartment buildings in any NYC neighborhood and you will be struck by the trees and flowering plants you can see overhanging the terraces and rooftops, not only in Manhattan, but also the outer boroughs.

Resident/Club member survey helped finalize "wish list"

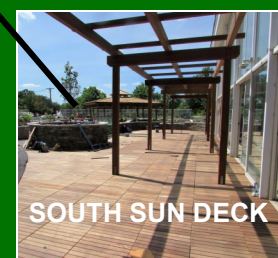
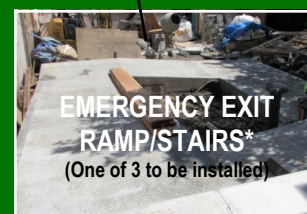
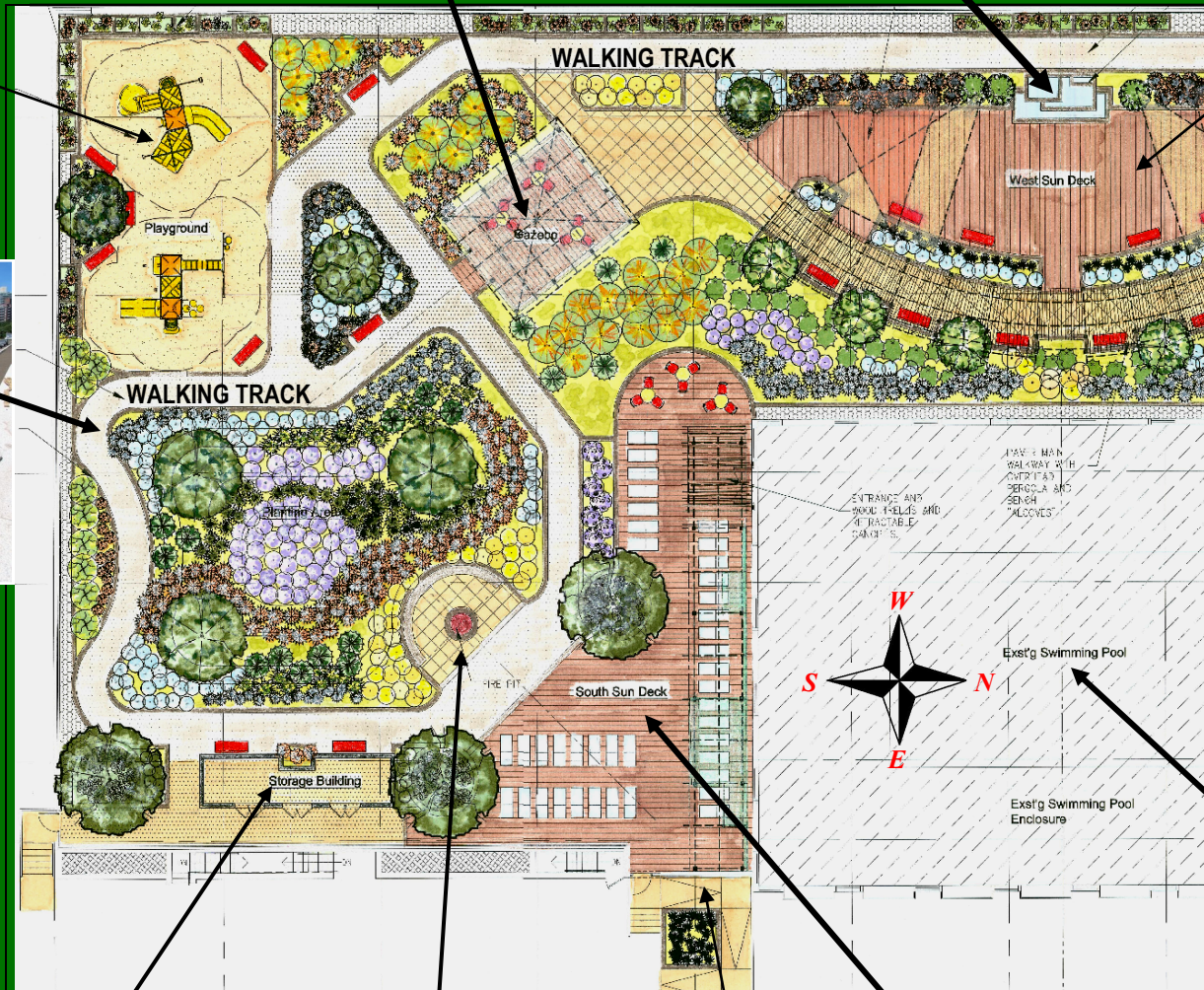
While the Board had definite opinions about the key features and amenities of the nascent green roof, the input of the general building population as well as Whitehall Club members was desired. And so, a detailed survey was circulated in December 2015. Happily, building residents' desires lined up well with those of the Board. Ranking the most requested green roof features in survey responses, fully 58% of respondents identified lots of shady areas and trees as most important. Nearly 35% also identified a walking path as critical, and 42% cited tables with umbrellas and sufficient lounge chairs. 18% of respondents mentioned open areas for sunbathing, while 21% listed a kids playground. Additional key features mentioned included lots of benches (16%), a water feature and fire pit (13% each), and handicapped accessibility (11%). All of these resident top picks were factored into the finalized plan, while some lower-ranked features were not included. w



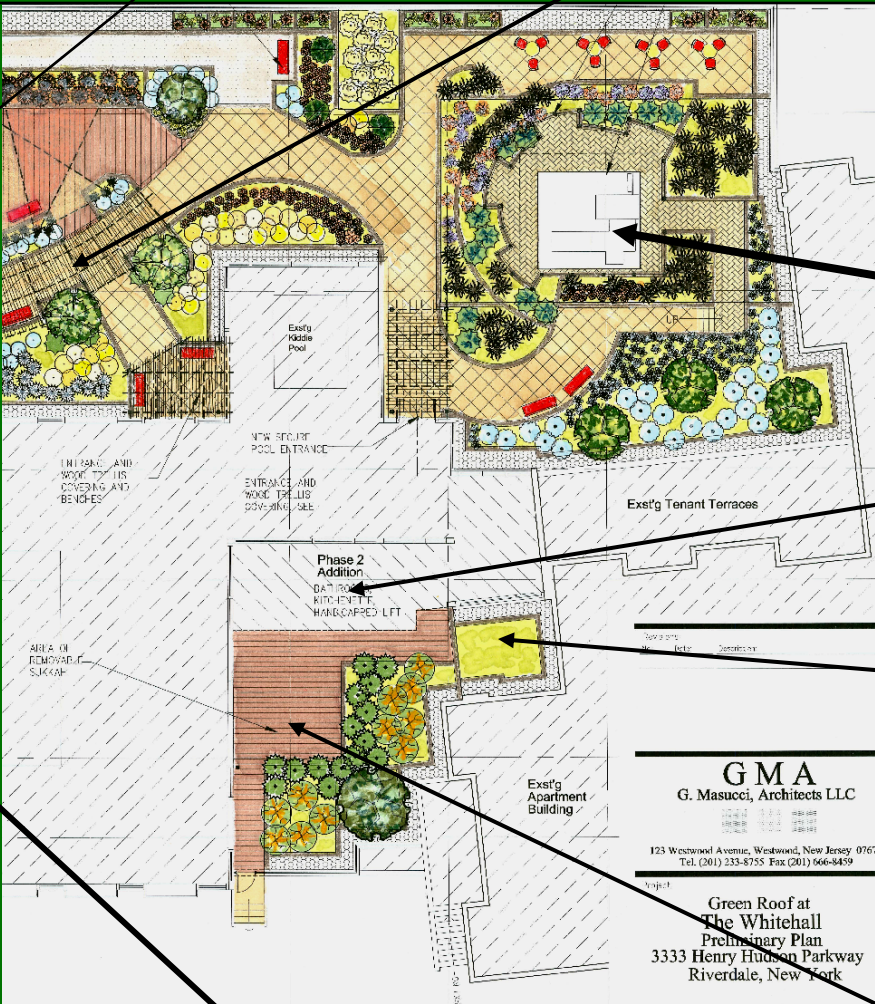
THE GREEN ROOF ROAD MAP: FROM DESIGN PLAN



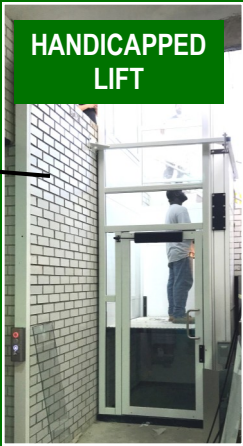
PLAYGROUND*



TO FUNCTIONING REALITY!



HANDICAPPED-ACCESSIBLE BATHROOMS, KITCHEN & PANTRY*



NORTH SUN DECK*

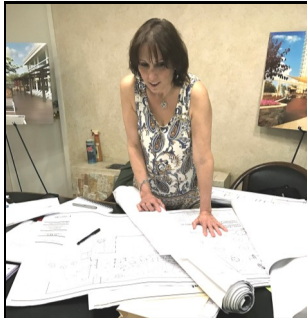


* = UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT PRESSTIME



Genie out of the bottle

THE WHITEHALL'S GREEN ROOF ARCHITECT TALKS ABOUT HOW SHE GOT HERE...ALL THE WAY FROM AGE 4!



Genie Masucci on the job.

To hear her tell it, Genie Masucci knew she was going to be an architect from the tender age of 4. "By then I was already constructing buildings out of dirt, sticks and anything I could get my hands on," she says. The Piermont, NY native, named Eugenia at birth to honor her grandmother, clearly comes by her profession honestly. Genie explains, "My maternal grandfather and his whole Italian immigrant family was into furniture and interior design. " Thus, when she was an undergraduate at SUNY Buffalo, she pursued a degree in interior design, but mainly because, as she says "People told me that women could not be architects." However, when she went back to Buffalo for her Master's, there was no hemming and hawing — this time the degree was Architecture right down the line. And Genie has been fortunate in that she has never lacked for work. Graduating with her Masters in the late 1980s, she began a 3-year internship with an architectural firm where she did a lot more than drafting — she was actively involved in design work, especially in major projects of airport design.

In 1995, she ventured out on her own, establishing an office in northern New Jersey in Dumont, where at first she focused on commercial work including libraries and restaurants. Eventually, she started receiving residential building assignments in the Riverdale area from Insignia, later Douglas Elliman, for established buildings they managed such as The Woodlands and Hayden on the Hudson. At that time, Douglas Elliman was also managing The Whitehall, and so Genie, almost by osmosis, handled a number of projects here, including reconstruction of the façade at the building's main entrance, and restoration work in the garage. But the Whitehall Green Roof is clearly the assignment of a lifetime, and Genie Masucci is eating, sleeping, breathing this project all day, every day.

Here's how she envisioned the job: "My objective was to create a warm, natural environment that contrasted with the large scale of the existing building but also maintaining unity with it by extending the crisp, contemporary detailing of the building to the pathways and garden structures of the roof park."

Genie worked closely with General Manager Gene Staudt and the Whitehall board to create the right mix of activities to

serve both the residents and the health club. Several "test fits" were created to get a combination of different activities that made sense to all, as well as determining the sizes of the areas. The overriding idea was to not try to fit either "too many" activities, which might make areas inadequate in size, or "too few" activities, which would not take advantage of the unique size of the roof. For example, early on there was interest in having a half-court basketball setup on the green roof. In the end, it was decided that it would take up too much space, and would require some amount of concrete flooring. The fact that several perfectly good basketball courts are available in Seton Park helped resolve the issue.



Genie Masucci and Gene Staudt oversee progress of construction of the gazebo on the green roof, as shrubs are just starting to go in.

After several design iterations, a consensus was finally reached. Sundecks were included that could also serve as areas for large gatherings; a playground for children of ages 12 and under; areas for small group gatherings such as a fire pit and gazebo; quiet intimate areas for reading or contemplation; and of course several gardens, all connected by a walking track designed to make the "journey" between different areas full of variety. Genie notes that "the aesthetics of the design are rooted in a strong basic geometry." She credits two of her early influences, architectural giants Frank Lloyd Wright and the more contemporary Frank Gehry, with this focus on basic geometric shapes. In fact, one of Frank Lloyd Wright's early residences — the Darwin Martin house — that symbolized his "prairie" design, with its strong horizontals, was actually on the campus of SUNY Buffalo, and Genie Masucci saw it close up virtually every day she was in college.

In her green roof design, a main path, formed by a wide arc from the entrance to the green roof, connects the most active areas of the roof with each other. This main path is covered with a teak pergola, designed as a trellis for vining plants. The centerpiece of the main gathering area is a cascading water feature which will "help buffer the area from the urban noises

Continued on Page 8

General Manager Gene Staudt has a little secret...

“PLANNING FOR THE WHITEHALL’S GREEN ROOF ACTUALLY STARTED IN 2005, WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THE BUILDING!”

Gene Staudt knew from the moment he arrived as The Whitehall’s General Manager in February of 2005 that the building’s 30,000 sq. ft. concrete/schoolyard/punchball court known as the pool deck would one day be reborn as a glorious green roof. Just ask him, and he’ll open a desk drawer and pull out a well-worn green folder that contains the handouts and his notes from a seminar on green roofs he attended in that year — including, by the way, a pro-green roof presentation by then Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion.

But Staudt’s involvement with rooftop greenery actually goes back further than that — about 20 years in fact, to when he was the building manager at 144 E. 84th St. in Manhattan’s Carnegie Hill neighborhood. For this 15-story co-op with 93 apartments, he transformed an unused rooftop into an airy lounge deck for building residents, dotted with small trees and



An early Gene Staudt rooftop project: 144 E. 84th; 1997

flowering shrubs in planters. When you add to that Mr. Staudt’s hands-on involvement with all aspects of Whitehall landscaping, up to and including selecting and seeing to the irrigation of the hanging baskets that beautify the front entrance of the building, you start to get the picture.

Gene Staudt won’t deny that he’s a control freak, so it’s no big shock that when asked what his biggest problem has been with the multi-million-dollar Whitehall Green Roof project, he says, without missing a beat, “the things I can’t control.” By that he means the waiting for inspections and permitting from a third party. For example, at presstime in mid-June, the handicapped lift was essentially complete and operational. However, until elevator inspectors formally approve the installation, we can’t legally use it. So, while there are problems relating to getting the required permits and timely delivery of some construction components, for Gene Staudt, the biggest surprise about this entire project is the lack of surprises. “This is amazing for something this complex,” he says. You can likely chalk that one up to Mr. Staudt’s role in this project as the construction manager. “It’s a combination of super-general contractor, expeditor, design consultant and procurement manager.” An important part of the job is to oversee and

manage the relationship between architect Genie Masucci and general contractor “Nino” of Grandline Corp. “I pull from years of experience coming up with practical solutions to get the job done,” he explains.

Also working in his favor is the fact that in his long career in building management, Staudt has overseen just about everything now being done on our green roof, but, as he is quick to admit, “not all at once.” What’s more, he’s not cowed by the price tag for this entire project, because he’s been involved in other projects that had an ever greater final cost.

Learning to love the details

What Gene Staudt seems to relish most is the addition of creative details that enhance the underlying *motif* of the project without really straining the budget. For instance, both architect Genie Masucci and he saw that an empty space directly behind the upper landing of the handicapped lift could be filled by building in a sizeable planter. The result will be that people riding the lift, or those simply walking up the stairs, will set their eyes not simply on a featureless void, but rather on a planter with beautiful greenery in it even before they get out onto the green roof proper. He’s also planning to put in planters with fairly large trees at the base of some of the several emergency exit ramps/stairs leading down toward Henry Hudson Parkway, to beautify and yet enhance the privacy of an area that most people will never see or use. And he is also quick to take direct action when necessary. When the contractor was having a problem locating a vendor for about 40 large planters that will line the perimeter of the roof, Staudt found a supplier in upstate New York, drove up, loaded a sample in his trunk, and placed an order on the spot.

With all of this frenzy of activity leading up to the opening of the green roof, Gene Staudt has not let other building-related tasks get back-burnered. Helping in this regard is the mutual open-door relationship he has always had with resident manager Albert Kove, and the fact that ongoing building maintenance has become such an important priority. And so, as the Whitehall Green Roof project is culminating, Gene Staudt is already turning his attention to what’s next. Whatever it is, you can be sure that he’ll be ready to dive in.



Gene Staudt on the job



Genie Out of The Bottle continued

below.” The main path ends in a gazebo area large enough for about 20 people; then, the path breaks down into meandering paths connecting the more quiet activities. These meandering paths double as a walking track paved with a resilient material for comfort.

The trees, plants and shrubs were selected by Meeka Van der Wal of nursery firm Design Farm. Genie credits Meeka with the selection that reinforces the variety of the overall design, and also perpetuates a variety of blooms from season to season. Implementation of the landscaping and landscape elements is being coordinated by Andrew Lavallo of Siteworks (which participated in the design and implementation of the High Line in Manhattan), all in accordance with Genie Masucci’s overall plan..

While going through the original building plans for The Whitehall, Genie turned up some interesting, largely forgotten facts. For example, while acclaimed NYC architect Philip Birnbaum created the original and all subsequent designs for The Whitehall, the building went through several name changes and also at least a couple of height changes. In 1966, the building was to be known as “Seton Park Towers.” Just a year later, the name was changed to “The Ambassador.” And the total number of stories jumped back and forth from 22 to 23 (minus “13” of course) — plus penthouse — over this same time period. It wasn’t until construction actually started in 1969, that the name The Whitehall, possibly chosen to reflect the white brick exterior, was officially adopted, and the building soared to its full height of 23 full stories plus the penthouse.

As noted, Genie Masucci is totally immersed in The Whitehall’s green roof project. But that doesn’t mean she has no home life. This single mom has three children of her own and two stepchildren, with three of the kids now actually living at home in New Jersey. But it’s equally clear that our green roof is Genie’s great big baby right now, and she is working very hard to make it the best it can be.



Arbor-like main entry to green roof leads directly to walking track and the west sun deck, with water teature off to the left.



Extensive plantings along the entire west façade of the pool enclosure provide a dramatic green backdrop when looking out from the pool.



Overhead shot looking south shows the intricacy of the walking paths. Large contoured green space in center of photo is just beginning to fill up with shrubs and grasses. Fire pit is at lower left of area. Playground will go in at upper right.



South sun deck, with pergola, as seen from the gazebo