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Affordable Housing Designs by The Architectural Team Earn National Recognition from Industry Experts – 2012 Readers' Choice Awards for "Nation's Top" Designs

From the conception and design of a rejuvenated multifamily housing development in Boston to the preservation of senior housing in Miami, an architecture firm receives recognition from leaders in fields championing affordability.

Chelsea, MA, July 11, 2012 – Today the nationally regarded architecture and master-planning firm, The Architectural Team, Inc., announced that it has received new national nominations for two of its affordable multifamily housing designs.

The firm, which has a long history of master planning, architecture and interior design for successful affordable housing around the country, was twice named a finalist in the *Affordable Housing Finance* 2012 AHF Readers' Choice Awards. Given to "the nation's top affordable housing developments of 2011-2012," according to editor Christine Serlin, "The finalists showcase some of the best in green technology, innovative financing, community revitalization, and social services ... And they serve a variety of populations."

Among the finalists this year in the "Preservation" category is the 100-unit apartment development called **New Horizons** in the Martin Luther King neighborhood of Miami, designed by The Architectural Team for the Boston-based nonprofit group Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH). Designated for needy senior residents, New Horizons involved the transformation of a failing seven-story masonry tower into a restored community with comfortable new finishes and fixtures, accessible room designs and high-efficiency lighting and heating/cooling systems. New amenities and exterior image complete the project's rehabilitation.

A second and more extensive redevelopment by The Architectural Team was also named as a finalist, in the "Urban" category: **The Homes at Old Colony** – Phase One in South Boston, Mass., a major sustainable development conceived through a partnership between Beacon Communities Development LLC and Boston Housing Authority. An innovative combination of new LEED-certifiable townhomes and a midrise building along with a new LEED Gold Certified, 10,000-square-foot community center – set among a redesigned street grid and enlivened cityscape image – have combined to transform The Homes at Old Colony into an unusually prominent national success story.



The Homes at Old Colony, South Boston, MA – (top L-R) Midrise building; townhomes; (bottom L-R) Joseph M. Tierney Learning Center and Playground.
Photos by Andy Ryan

A national shortlist

The two affordable developments, chosen from among approximately 140 nominated projects from around the country, help illuminate the range of possibilities for solving today’s growing affordable housing needs. **New Horizons** was an existing building threatened with foreclosure that has been recast as a livable, low-cost apartment community. **The Homes at Old Colony**, a formerly distressed public housing development located on a 16-acre site, has been a low-income community since 1941, yet it was completely revitalized thanks to a grant for “environmentally sustainable public-housing transformation” given by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Using insightful yet pragmatic design solutions and cost-effective means, the designers at The Architectural Team implemented these two cited projects in ways that reflect the firm’s respect for site, context and environmental sustainability – and its active, 40-year history designing a broad range of affordable housing developments.

From master planning and new construction to renovations and adaptive reuse of historic and varied building types, The Architectural Team has helped build tens of thousands of units for many families across the country. The firm has a longstanding history of being recognized for its role in preserving historic buildings and the active role of its principal architects in affordability plans and designs. The firm’s recent honors include a lifetime-achievement award from Habitat for Humanity Greater Boston acknowledging the firm’s cofounder and managing partner, Robert J. Verrier, FAIA.

“After 41 years of designing more than 75,000 units of multifamily housing, The Architectural Team firm has broad expertise and a deep understanding of the socio-economic impact these new developments have on a community,” says Michael D. Binette, AIA, principal at The Architectural Team. “It’s imperative to design high-quality, affordable homes where residents feel safe, valued and a part of a larger whole. The design solution’s goal is intended be a beacon of hope for all who live there.”

Comments by the involved owners and agencies have reinforced how the architecture solutions have contributed to successful housing.

“The redevelopment of Old Colony has been extremely important to the residents of the development and the surrounding community,” said Bill McGonagle, Administrator of the Boston Housing Authority, which has owned and managed the site since it was built. “We’ve created beautiful, affordable, energy-efficient housing for the people of this community.”



New Horizons, Miami, FL

The New Horizons renovation is also considered a local success story. “As with its other Florida properties, POAH preserved affordability at New Horizons by preventing a foreclosure by a seller facing bankruptcy,” according to the nonprofit Preservation of Affordable Housing, which “was able to negotiate their debt positions to help keep these preservation partners from suffering too large a loss, but also to strengthen the balance sheet of this asset.”

Voting online for winners

The two housing developments will be featured in the July/August issue of *Affordable Housing Finance magazine*, and readers — mainly housing developers and finance experts – as well as others will choose by online ballot the most deserving in each category and an overall winner. The website <http://www.housingfinance.com/ahf/articles/2012/july-august/0712-cover-2012-Readers-Choice-Awards.htm> will host the voting from July 11 to August 15, 2012. Winners are announced in September and featured in the November/December issue, along with a luncheon in their honor at AHF Live: The 2012 Affordable Housing Developers’ Summit, to be held in Chicago, November 14-16.

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About The Architectural Team, Inc.

Founded in 1971, The Architectural Team, Inc. is a 65-person master planning and architectural firm that has grown through its design excellence and commitment to responsive and collaborative client relationships. The firm has developed a portfolio of distinctive design solutions for a broad range of building types and programs, and has earned more than 90 awards for design excellence. These include the new construction of large urban mixed-use developments, multifamily residential, commercial, hospitality, recreational, and academic facilities, as well as a national reputation in the area of historic preservation and adaptive reuse. The firm is located in the restored 1840s-era Commandant's House in Chelsea, Mass. Visit the firm's website at www.architecturalteam.com.