ULX: 10 Next-Wave Mixed Income Housing Projects

By Ron Nyren
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Making housing affordable for low- and middle-income households in urban areas has become more of a challenge as wages stagnate and housing costs rise. Combining affordable and market-rate dwellings can help: market-rate units may be able to subsidize affordable ones, and the affordable components can tap additional sources of funding or garner density bonuses.

The following ten projects, all completed during the past five years, create rental and for-sale units for individuals and families earning a range of incomes by rehabilitating vacant lumber mill buildings or deteriorated brutalist-style social housing blocks, or replacing defunct hospitals, old military barracks, automobile repair garages, or vacant sites and parking lots.

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1. Arlington 360
Arlington, Massachusetts

The opening of Arlington 360 in 2014 represents the culmination of more than a decade of efforts to redevelop the 18-acre (7 ha) hilltop campus of Symmes Hospital, which closed in 1999. Various plans fell through until Jefferson Apartment Group of McLean, Virginia, and Upton + Partners of Dedham, Massachusetts, purchased the site out of foreclosure from the previous development team to create a community with 164 apartments and 12 for-sale townhouses.

To make the most of the steep site, The Architectural Team of Chelsea, Massachusetts, placed two four-story apartment buildings near the site's center and located two- and three-story townhouses along the perimeter to relate to the scale of the surrounding neighborhood. The arrangement maximizes views and daylight for all units. Twenty-six of the apartments are affordable, with 17 reserved for households earning at or below 80 percent of area median income (AMI) and nine for those earning below 120 percent of AMI. Amenities include public parks, a community garden, and walking trails.