

**Boston Real Estate Times**

# With The Archer Residences Condos, The Architectural Team Sets a New Design Standard for Reimagining Older Buildings

By **Boston Real Estate Times**

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CHELSEA, MA – Reflecting its creative and influential approach to multifamily housing design, the architecture and adaptive reuse leader **The Architectural Team (TAT)** announced the completion of **The Archer Residences** — a 62-unit condominium building in Boston’s historic Beacon Hill neighborhood.

Described as a “splendid historic treasure” by Forbes, the development is equally significant as a case study in generating valuable housing assets from conversions of complex and underutilized commercial buildings.



Archer Residences also speaks to an enduring market desire for authenticity and a design approach that feels sophisticated and timeless, adds TAT architect Matt Duggan, AIA, who served as project manager on the development: “In our experience, residents really connect with and are inspired by older buildings, and The Archer Residences is unique in that respect as well – its Classical Revival portion represents what people traditionally view as historic, while its newer, 1960s Modernist component strikes a chord with today’s greater appreciation for midcentury design.”

### **A Uniquely Creative Residential Transformation**

The Archer Residences’ intricate redevelopment process required a deft touch from the architects. To create a cohesive internal transition between the two distinct six-story structures, TAT stitched them together with a staircase and elevator banks, among other complicated structural moves. Known as leading experts in historic preservation and restoration, TAT’s design team also guided the restoration of the older, 1920s building’s façade, and re-clad the 1960s Modernist building with a new brick and granite skin. This approach forms a cohesive feel and shared architectural

language for the two buildings, while still preserving their distinct architectural characters. Nearly invisible from the street, carefully set-back penthouse additions on the roof create space for exciting residential units and shared rooftop garden and amenity areas. More details on the architectural solutions follow below.

“Beacon Hill has a very cohesive architectural texture, so we sought out every opportunity to make The Archer Residences the best possible neighbor,” notes TAT’s Duggan. “It’s a design that hides its scale well and gives equal weight to the experience of residents and fellow Bostonians alike. We’re proud to highlight how adaptive reuse can help large developments fit seamlessly into their neighborhood fabric, and how thoughtful renovation work can allow buildings with architectural styles as diverse as Classical Revival and Modernism to enrich each other and their surroundings.”

### **Setting a New Standard for Boston Living**

Residents of The Archer Residences benefit from a similarly thoughtful approach to amenity programming, space planning, and interior design. As the first fully-amenitized, full-service luxury condominium in the Beacon Hill neighborhood, the property blends the area’s historic elegance with 21st-century convenience. The interior design by LDa Architecture & Interiors combines old-world materials with streamlined and contemporary application and detailing.



The generously proportioned individual units offer either a contemporary or transitional style, accommodating a range of tastes. All units feature unique layouts with large chef's kitchens, open floor plans, and market-leading fixtures and finishes, including rift-oak flooring and cabinetry, marble countertops and baths, and pre-wiring for Lutron window treatments and home entertainment systems.

Shared amenity areas are programmed and designed to foster community and encourage gathering. Interior amenity highlights include a full-service pet spa, fitness and wellness center curated by The Wright Fit, a conference room, kid's playroom, and bike storage, along with a clubroom featuring a double-sided Mont Blanc quartz fireplace. Many of the spaces, including the lobby and reception area, also offer a custom art program with installations by artists Lori Shouela and Matt Shlian. And at a time of increased consciousness related to physical and emotional health and wellbeing, the architects note that the project's combination of outdoor space and flexible units with large windows offers the kind of comfortable, engaging environment that has a broad appeal.

Unique for this dense urban setting, TAT's design for The Archer Residences also provides 50 below-grade parking spots, serviced by a 24-hour valet and accessed via a vehicle elevator. The compact and efficient parking system uses tandem car stackers, making the most of what was once a subterranean university cafeteria. According to the architects, it's this level of creativity, attention to detail, and resident experience within such a unique setting that defines the project and sets it apart as a compelling case study.



“From the intensive initial planning and technical discussions down to the minute considerations of layouts and finishes, The Archer Residences is about generating an exceptional environment and celebrating what it means to live in a historic neighborhood today,” concludes TAT’s Szymanski. “In a larger sense, this new residential community also offers insight into a future where repurposing greater numbers of existing buildings will become a necessity. As architects and designers who have long advocated for the economic, environmental, and cultural value of adaptive reuse, we think it’s an exciting opportunity for innovation and dynamic solutions that can make our cities more livable for all.”

### **About the Architectural Solutions at The Archer Residences**

Converting this pair of buildings from their former institutional use into residences was a highly involved and complex process, requiring significant structural modifications in order to effectively merge the two buildings into one. Once the new structure was stabilized, the design team chose to preserve much of the original buildings’ varied ceiling heights and window forms, ensuring a

level of singularity among individual units – there are now 57 different layouts in the 62-unit property. Some residences even have direct street access, offering the feel of an urbane townhome in a full-service condominium community.

The conversion also necessitated a different approach to renovation work for each building. TAT restored decorative cast-concrete panels and exterior brickwork on the older Classical Revival structure, built during the 1920s and once home to the Suffolk University School of Law. With an eye towards reducing the conversion's embodied carbon, TAT was able to reuse approximately 85% of the original building materials by surface area.

For the second building — constructed in the 1960s to hold a new law library, classrooms, and lecture space – TAT's vision struck a compelling balance, strengthening the building's original Modernist design statement, while also better responding to the neighborhood context. Creatively adapting the core Modernist principles of Le Corbusier's Five Points Towards a New Architecture, the project team replaced the original brick façade with new cladding in a historically contextual palette of red brick and granite. At ground level, bronzed storefront windows with smooth granite surrounds and columns generate an inviting presence along the alley-like Temple Street, and offer a complementary juxtaposition to the rough stone apse of a church located across from the building. Higher up, a new line of horizontal ribbon windows on the fifth and sixth floors form a visual cornice line at the fourth story, creating a better alignment with the adjacent low-rise historic buildings on either side of the street. Individual materials were all selected for their sustainability and long product lifecycle as well as their appropriateness in relation to the surrounding Beacon Hill architecture.

TAT's meticulous attention to detail extends to The Archer Residences' roof as well. The project's penthouse additions, including a copper and glass jewel-box residence, are carefully set back as the result of extensive sightline studies, meeting stringent local guidelines and ensuring they are largely unseen from the street. Residents benefit from this approach, too: the penthouse setbacks create space for nearly 5,000 square feet of shared roof gardens and outdoor amenity areas, a health and wellness boon – and, with sweeping views including onto the nearby Massachusetts State House, a major differentiator in the high-end market.

In highlighting once again the potential for existing buildings to play an important new role in providing housing and enhancing urban livability, The Archer Residences also underscores how smart adaptive-reuse strategies can turn even the most unlikely structures into compelling new assets for housing

and other essential uses, say observers — helping fill an urgent demand in Boston and setting an example for cities and towns nationwide.

And as TAT honors its 50th anniversary in 2021, the project also serves as a meaningful expression of the passion held by late firm founder Robert J. Verrier, FAIA, NCARB, for the preservation and revitalization of the historic fabric of American cities – an outlook that remains crucial to TAT’s mission. One of the country’s foremost leaders in historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and housing design, TAT’s work on The Archer Residences builds on decades of experience and the successful conversion of dozens of historic mill, school, commercial, and other buildings for vital new purposes.