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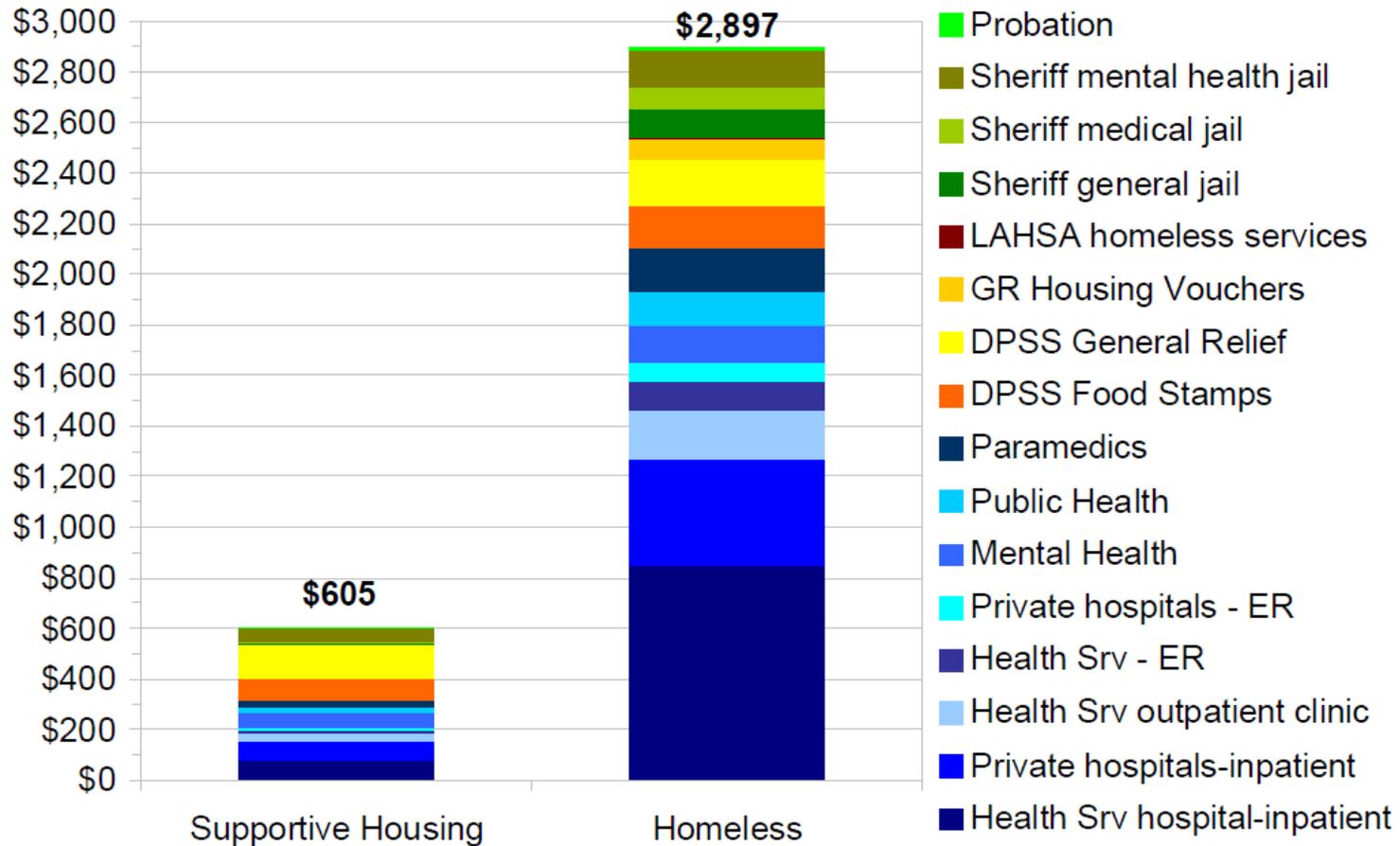
Press Kit

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Average Monthly Costs by Public Agency for Persons in Supportive Housing and Homeless Persons



Source: 279 Matched pairs of SRHT supportive housing residents and homeless General Relief recipients

Where We Sleep: Costs When Homeless and Housed in Los Angeles (2009)

Underwritten through the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority by the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, Corporation for Supportive Housing, The California Endowment, and the Economic Roundtable

This report can be downloaded from the Economic Roundtable web site: www.economicrtr.org



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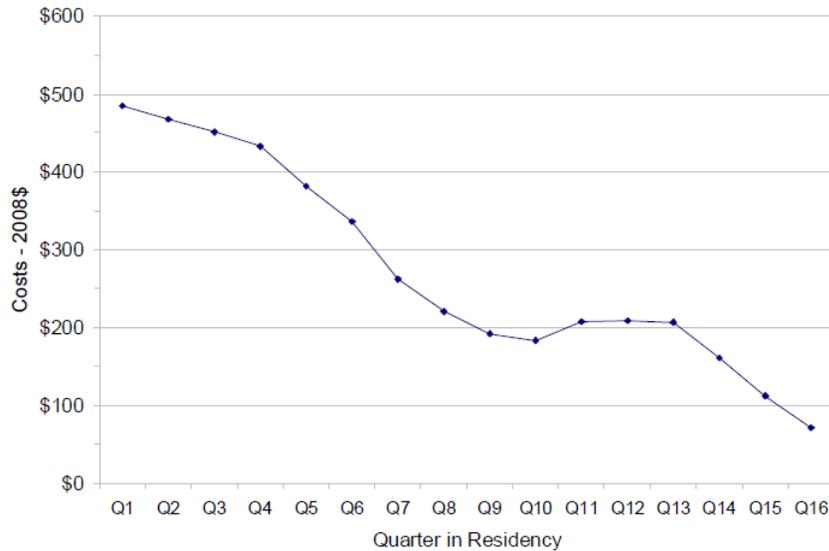
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Overall Average Monthly Savings for Residents in Supportive Housing after Operating and Capital Costs for Housing and Costs for Public Services

	Average Monthly Cost Savings for Public Services	Costs per Supportive Housing Resident		Average Monthly Savings in Public Costs	Percent Savings in Public Costs	
		Operating Cost - Average Monthly Rent Subsidy	Capital Costs - Average Monthly Cost per Unit			
ALL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RESIDENTS	-\$2,291	\$352	\$750	-\$1,190	41%	
Gender	Female	-\$2,292	\$381	\$750	-\$1,162	41%
	Male	-\$2,301	\$339	\$750	-\$1,212	41%
Age	30-45 Years	-\$2,235	\$401	\$750	-\$1,084	39%
	46-65 Years	-\$2,652	\$339	\$750	-\$1,564	48%
Race/Ethnicity	African American	-\$2,723	\$361	\$750	-\$1,612	48%
	White	-\$1,204	\$281	\$750	-\$173	9%
Work History	No Work in Past 3 Years	-\$2,407	\$340	\$750	-\$1,317	43%
	Worked in Past 3 Years	-\$1,030	\$395	\$750	\$114	-8%
Mental Health	Mental Illness	-\$2,522	\$346	\$750	-\$1,426	46%
	Mental Illness w/ SA Problem	-\$2,823	\$364	\$750	-\$1,709	49%
Substance Abuse	No SA Indicators	-\$1,740	\$306	\$750	-\$684	31%
	SA Problem	-\$2,420	\$367	\$750	-\$1,303	42%
HIV/AIDS	No Documented HIV/AIDS	-\$1,974	\$350	\$750	-\$874	34%
	HIV/AIDS Documented	-\$3,125	\$374	\$750	-\$2,001	52%

Source: 279 Matched pairs of SRHT supportive housing residents and homeless General Relief recipients

Median Monthly Cost for Supportive Housing Residents by Quarter in Residency



Source: 322 SRHT residents housed for at least 12 months during cost window (July 2005 – Dec 2008)
Note: A 3-month moving average is used to present cost data





Ad

Wonkblog

This is what housing for the homeless could actually look like



By **Emily Badger** July 14 at 4:10 PM [Follow @emilybadger](#)

The New Carver Apartments in Los Angeles, designed by Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc. for the Skid Row Housing Trust. Photo by Iwan Baan.

In case you missed it, Post colleagues Justin Jovenal, Robert Samuels and DeNeen L. Brown had [a devastating investigation](#) in Sunday's paper of D.C. General, the largest shelter for homeless families in the District.

The shelter, now home to more than 400 families, is located in a former hospital that closed in 2001. Since then, the facility itself — pictured below — has decayed, putting residents at risk of ringworm, rashes, parasites, murky water and faulty heating. And the security and support there have unraveled, too, as staff appear to have preyed on residents and as violence has grown common.

Advertisement



WASHINGTON, DC - JULY 11:Exterior view of the DC General Shelter, on July, 11, 2014 in Washington, DC.(Photo by Bill O'Leary/The Washington Post)

A lot of details in the story are heartbreaking, including the history of how this facility — which neighbors a meth clinic, a working jail and a city morgue — came to house the homeless in the first place:

City officials and homeless advocates say D.C. General has never been properly maintained because most saw it as a Band-Aid for the city's homelessness problem. The city began using the facility as a temporary shelter on cold nights in 2001, when the family shelter, D.C. Village, became overcrowded.

Fenty [closed D.C. Village in 2007](#) amid complaints that it was infested with mice, roaches and other vermin unsuitable for children. His administration shifted families to D.C. General until a replacement could be found.

But the city never found one. During the winter months, almost 600 children were living in the former hospital.

“We have been in a nether world of not wanting to commit a lot of resources to the building and to the programs because we always saw this as a temporary solution,” [Jim] Graham, chairman of

the D.C. Council's Human Services Committee, said at a recent hearing.

That background points to a recurring reality in many cities: So often, we house the homeless in the spaces left over — in buildings that have (barely) outlived their original purpose, in [former psychiatric hospitals](#), in [church basements](#), in [empty gymnasiums](#), in places that are explicitly temporary. While I was thinking about this over the weekend, a reader sent me a story about a California town trying to house [children crossing the Mexican border in a literal warehouse](#) (hat tip [@CivicBrand](#)).

Much less often, we create facilities specifically designed to house the homeless and the accompanying services they need. But when we do, the results can look so much different from the picture above. For some examples of what's possible as D.C. ponders its next moves, below are images of housing developed by the [Skid Row Housing Trust](#) in Los Angeles, some of it designed in more affordable modular construction and by well-known architects better known for their work on market-rate projects.

Another view of Michael Maltzan's New Carver Apartments, photo by Iwan Baan

These buildings have services built into them. And they were created, using public and private money, with the idea that community investments in quality permanent

supportive housing can be less costly in the long run than stopgap measures meant to merely shelter the homeless without addressing the issues that make them so.

Buildings like these alter both the outward relationship of social housing to the surrounding neighborhood, and the experience of the people who live inside.

Some more images for thought for D.C., continuing with the interior if the Michael Maltzan-designed New Carver Apartments in L.A.:

Iwan Baan

Iwan Baan

The Skid Row Housing Trust's Rainbow Apartments, also by Michael Maltzan Architecture:

Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc.

Michael Maltzan Architecture, Inc.

Maltzan's [Star Apartments](#):

Skid Row Housing Trust

Skid Row Housing Trust

"There are the typical financial challenges that exist within affordable housing, but they're exacerbated when you're serving individuals who are chronically homeless, because many of them have physical and mental illnesses," says Dana Trujillo, Development Director for the Skid Row Housing Trust. "From a political perspective, it's really difficult to enter into new communities and build relationships with the surrounding community. There's a lot of fear about permanent supportive housing and what it means for a community, and I think it's just for lack of knowledge."

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SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST

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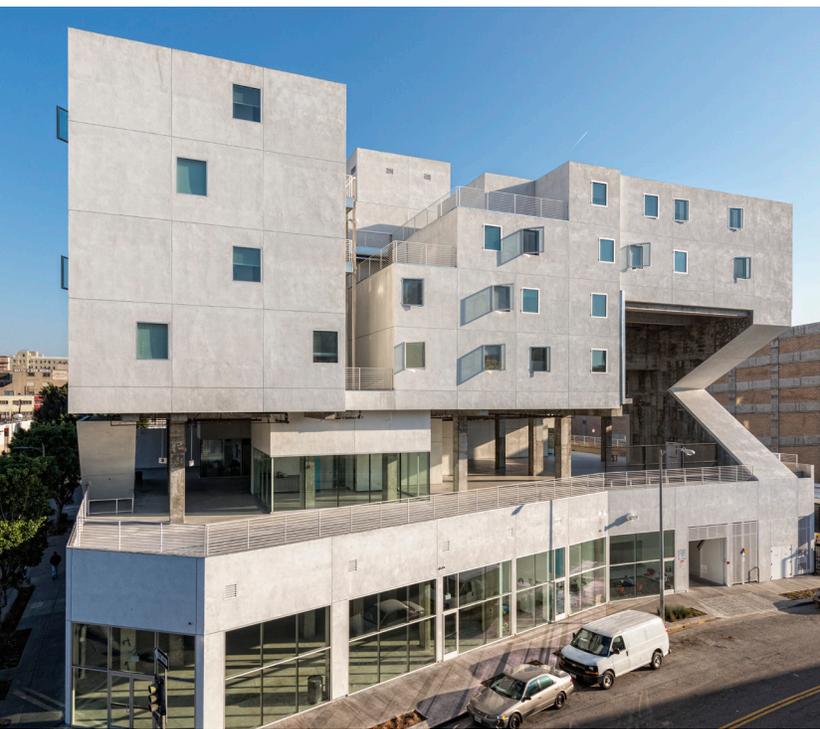
AMERICA'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING RESOURCE



48 cover story

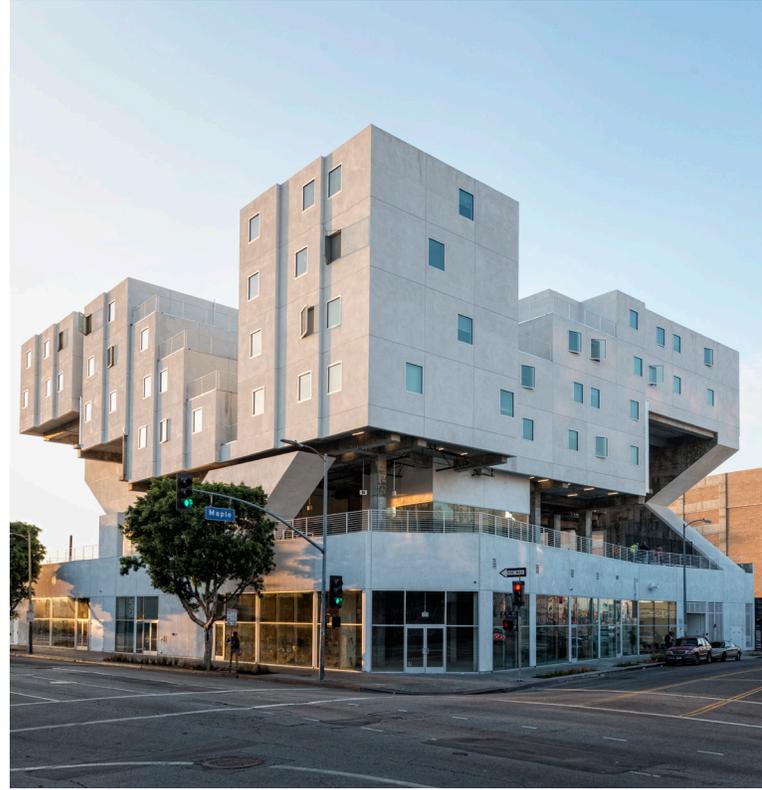
SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST

Recent efforts demonstrate benefits of permanent supportive housing



A New Angle

Recent efforts demonstrate benefits of permanent supportive housing



Skid Row Housing Trust is an established affordable housing developer that has focused on providing permanent supportive housing options in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles for the past 25 years. The organization is gearing its efforts toward creating permanent supportive housing to serve the chronically homeless by maximizing innovative partnerships and housing models.

Two of these efforts include New Genesis and the Star Apartments. Both are intended to address the problem of homelessness on a deeper, more sustainable level.

“Both projects, for very different reasons, really emphasize how public-private partnerships are key in addressing homelessness,” says Dana Trujillo, Development Director for Skid Row Housing Trust. “There’s not necessarily one model for doing it, but it’s very important to have a collaborative process to come up with a model that works for where you are developing and who you are serving.”

LOOKING AT PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Originally a residential hotel, the New Genesis community stems from a 30-unit residential hotel the Trust acquired in the late 1980s. Leveraging the parking lot next to the original building to create a new mixed-use building and ex-



Skid Row Housing Trust

Development Director :: Dana Trujillo | Location :: Los Angeles, California

“THERE IS AN ENTIRE FLOOR ON THE STAR APARTMENTS DEDICATED TO RECREATIONAL AND WELLNESS USES FOR NOT JUST THE RESIDENTS [AT THE STAR] BUT ALSO THE 1,500 INDIVIDUALS WHO LIVE IN OUR PORTFOLIO WITHIN THE SURROUNDING MILE.”

-Dana Trujillo



panding the residential component to 106 units.

“In terms of significance, it is a very integrated, multi-user, multi-use building in a very active mainstream part of downtown Los Angeles,” Trujillo says. “It’s located in an area where there are a lot of commercial, retail and art uses. New Genesis has 75 percent formerly homeless individuals and 25 percent low-income individuals, many of whom are artists, as well as commercial uses on the ground floor. It’s really a model for having a lot of integrated uses and showing that special needs, formerly homeless individuals can integrate within a mainstream, very active market-rate community.”

Similarly, the Star Apartments was built to serve a market in need of affordable housing options in the heart of the Skid Row neighborhood. The effort, completed in October 2013, focused on providing an alternative housing option to the area’s residents and promoting healthy living.

“There is an entire floor on the Star Apartments dedicated to recreational and wellness uses for not just the residents [at the Star] but also the 1,500 individuals who live in our portfolio within the surrounding mile,” Trujillo says. “It has ground-floor commercial, which is more community and health driven, including the offices for the [Los Angeles County Department of Health Services] Housing for Health Division. It’s going to have its headquarters located on the ground floor of the Star Apartments, and then [DHS] will also operate the clinic that’s also located at the site.”

Permanent supportive housing initiatives differ from many other affordable housing efforts in that the permanent initiatives plan and sustain the housing and welfare of residents over the long term. In many cases, affordable housing initiatives focus on rehabilitative programs intended to get those in need in a state of self-sufficiency in the short term. According to Trujillo and multiple studies, this system does not work well much of the time.

“There’s this perception that when you get people off the street, they will stabilize their lives

and be able to enter back into the workforce,” Trujillo says. “But when you’re serving chronically homeless individuals, that’s only true for a very small percentage. The majority of people who come into our apartments are in need of intensive services. Some of that declines over time, but there is always a need for ongoing services and rental subsidy in perpetuity while they’re residing in our units.”

Taking this approach can be challenging, as the Skid Row Housing Trust needs to consider costs that last much longer than the typical affordable housing setting. The trust also must find ways to work with a population that’s not always welcomed into communities.

“There are the typical financial challenges that exist within affordable housing, but they’re exacerbated when you’re serving individuals who are chronically homeless, because many of them have physical and mental illnesses,” Trujillo says. “From a political perspective, it’s really difficult to enter into new communities and build relationships with the surrounding community. There’s a lot of fear about permanent supportive housing and what it means for a community, and I think it’s just for lack of knowledge.”

CONTINUING STRONG GROWTH

After 25 years, the Skid Row Housing Trust has stayed true to its roots in affordable housing, while adapting to additional needs the Trust has identified. Firmly committed to serving chronically homeless and those that are most vulnerable, the organization’s leadership wants to see the model created go beyond the Skid Row neighborhood.

“It saves the government and the taxpayers a lot of money to take really sick individuals who are living on the street and put them into permanent supportive housing because their reliance on various public agencies and services declines significantly,” Trujillo says. “We want to show other jurisdictions that you can do really great mixed-use, mixed-user buildings that integrate well into your community. Our goal is to really increase our capacity for the next five years.”

April 7, 2014

Good Design Is for Everyone: The Evolution of Low-Income Housing in L.A.

Lyra Kilston, KCET



The phrases "public housing" or "low-income housing" do not generally conjure thoughts of architectural innovation. Instead, one may envision rows of faded pastel cubes surrounded by dead lawns and tall fences, or looming concrete towers gridded with small windows. Both schemes are typically weighted with a grim institutional air, appear to have been built as cheaply as possible, and often address only one problem, shelter, amid many others.

But it doesn't have to be that way, as several recent housing developments in Los Angeles prove. Instead, they pose the question: What if low-income housing was perceived as leading the vanguard of innovative, responsive architecture?

Take the recently completed [Star Apartments](#), located in the heart of downtown's Skid Row. Commissioned by [Skid Row Housing Trust](#), and designed by renowned L.A. architect Michael Maltzan, it provides permanent housing and social services to the formerly homeless. Star Apartments is also breathtaking architecture, consisting of a staggered row of four-story white blocks hovering over the existing ground level. Between these two levels is a large terrace, providing communal outdoor space away from the street. To save on cost and construction time, the 102 housing units within the blocks were prefabricated and lifted by crane on top of each other like blocks. Maltzan states that it's the first multi-unit housing to use this method since the mid-20th century, a time when prefabrication was celebrated as a modern, mechanized solution to the housing problem.



Star Apartments night rendering.

Besides offering permanent subsidized housing, Star Apartments features an on-site wellness center, medical clinic, and community areas for socializing, making art, using computers, and exercising. As Theresa Hwang, Community Architect at the Trust notes, these additions to the residences represent a unique architectural investment in community-building activities. "It's really pushing the typology of permanent supportive housing," she says.

Star Apartments is Maltzan's third design with the Trust for this population. His Rainbow (2006) and Carver (2009) apartments also offer spaces for socializing like courtyards and communal gardens and kitchens. It's an especially urgent design element for a population that can feel extremely cut off from public life. Skid Row Housing Trust, a non-profit diversely funded by the city and state, federal tax credits, grants, and donations, is driven by the question: "How can the homeless become viewed as equal if their housing is not?" As to questions about spending more than the bare minimum on their projects, there's an equation. Living in equal housing creates a sense of pride which in turn encourages permanence for the residents. As the Trust maintains, if the residents remain in stable housing, that means they're at less risk of ending up with medical emergencies or being arrested and sent to prisons; it ultimately saves taxpayer money.



Carver Apartments

Besides Maltzan, the Trust has partnered with Koning Eizenberg Architects, Killefer Flamang, Perkins + Will, and other notable local firms. The results are an emerging landscape of strikingly designed buildings, responsive to the needs of their residents, and far more compelling, architecturally, than many of the indistinguishable condos rising throughout downtown.

In fact, these residences are creating a new design-trail, with requests to tour the buildings pouring in daily. "If our buildings become an 'architectural playground' that could be a positive thing," says Hwang. "It helps break down borders

between people." It may also help to integrate this kind of housing into more affluent neighborhoods that often attempt to bar it.

Noting that most urban transformation often results in huge centralized projects like L.A. Live or The Grove, Maltzan points out the unique geographic dispersion of the Trust's buildings, which are building up "a series of small points on the map over time. If you were start to draw lines between them and create an imaginary web, you realize that that also can have an enormous effect on the whole perception of the city." He adds, "Frankly, I think that's what the Trust is achieving. They're changing the city one increment at a time, but it's starting to become a very large and powerful influence."



Residents in front of the newly constructed Pueblo Del Rio Housing Project. | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

In addition to innovative architecture, the Trust's design process itself is unique. Each architecture firm has meetings with staff, property managers, and current and future Trust residents to discuss the design plan and how it should be altered. "This way the aesthetics of the project are deeply linked to its functionality from the beginning," says Hwang. Hiring architects willing to experiment, listen to the residents' needs, and create uplifting designs the city can be proud of, is something the Trust (as well as similar organizations like Santa Monica's Community Corporation and West Hollywood Community Housing Corp) is committed to.

As an ambition, though, such aims aren't new to Southern California. Many of our celebrated architects of decades past, influenced by European modernism, were passionate about design as a means for social progression. (Even the iconic midcentury modern homes of the Case Study House Program were intended for affordable mass production.) Funding was frequently a challenge, but the changing political landscape had an even greater impact.

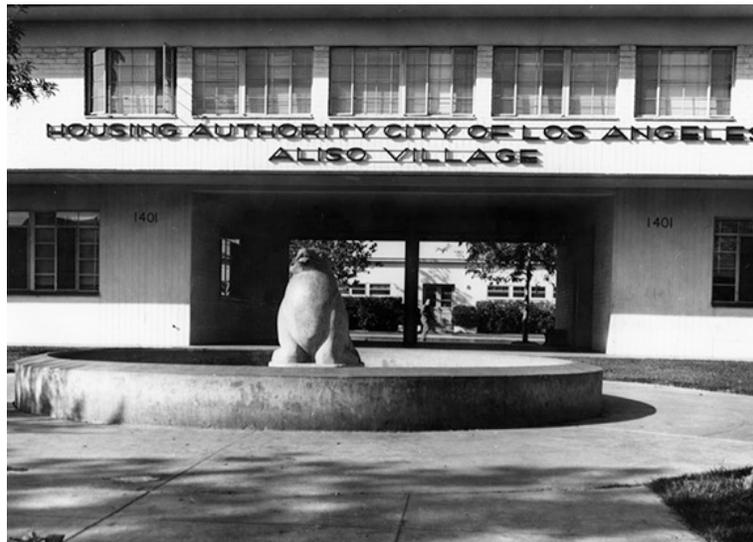
During the Depression, affordable housing was a nationwide concern; in 1940s Southern California that urgency overlapped with a need to house wartime factory workers and then returning veterans. Bolstered by federal financial support (Housing Act of 1937) and a continuing New Deal ethos, housing was considered a human right and discussed with a level of positive, even moral rhetoric that seems impossibly idealistic from today's vantage. To wit, Franklin Roosevelt's proposal for a second Bill of Rights, in 1944, included "the right of every family to a decent home."

In the service of social progression, many architects of this era fused modernist design with the pastoral ideals of the Garden City movement to create quickly fabricated, affordable, and dignifying residential developments. Historian Don Parsons calls this design-for-the-masses "community modernism." There was the architecturally and socially progressive **Aliso Village**, designed by Ralph Flewelling and Lloyd Wright (son of Frank Lloyd Wright). Opened in 1942 in Boyle Heights, Aliso was one of the first racially integrated housing projects in the nation. Its innovative masterplan offered protected green space away from the street, simple light-filled dwellings, a school and adjacent nursery school, and sheltered play areas for children. **Pueblo del Rio** (1941-42) was designed by a team of star architects, including Paul R. Williams, Richard Neutra, Gordon B. Kaufmann, and Wurdeman & Becket. It featured modern, sunny apartments with access to both private and communal outdoor spaces, and an average of one-and-a-half fruit trees per household.¹ In Richard Neutra's unrealized plans for **Amity Village** in Compton, he wanted the design to mimic living in a park instead of a city. Again intending for the site to offer enriching options beyond mere shelter, Neutra's plan included mixed-use areas

for businesses, a craft center, a nursery, school, and a community-meeting and recreation center.²



Exterior view of Aliso Village | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library



Exterior view of the entrance to Aliso Village | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

With funding from the 1937 housing act, ten public housing projects were constructed in Los Angeles: Aliso Village, Avalon Gardens, Estrada Courts, Hacienda Village, Pico Gardens, Pueblo del Rio, Ramona Gardens, Rancho San Pedro, Rose Hill Courts, and William Mead Homes. In 1949, more funding was granted for the construction of Mar Vista Gardens, Nickerson Gardens, and San Fernando Gardens.³

However, this golden era was abruptly eclipsed. During the Cold War, Southern California emerged as a stronghold of McCarthyism. Private sector real estate boards, property owner leagues, and the politicians seeking their votes launched an outright war against public housing, which was portrayed as "part of a conspiratorial effort by well-placed communists [...] to destroy traditional American values through a carefully calculated policy of racial and class struggle."⁴ The local housing authority was demonized and compared to the Gestapo. This conflict was so incendiary that public housing became the primary issue during Los Angeles's 1953 mayoral race, and the incumbent candidate who supported it was branded a communist and lost.⁵ The winner, Norris Poulson, instantly canceled the city's public housing contract with the federal government.

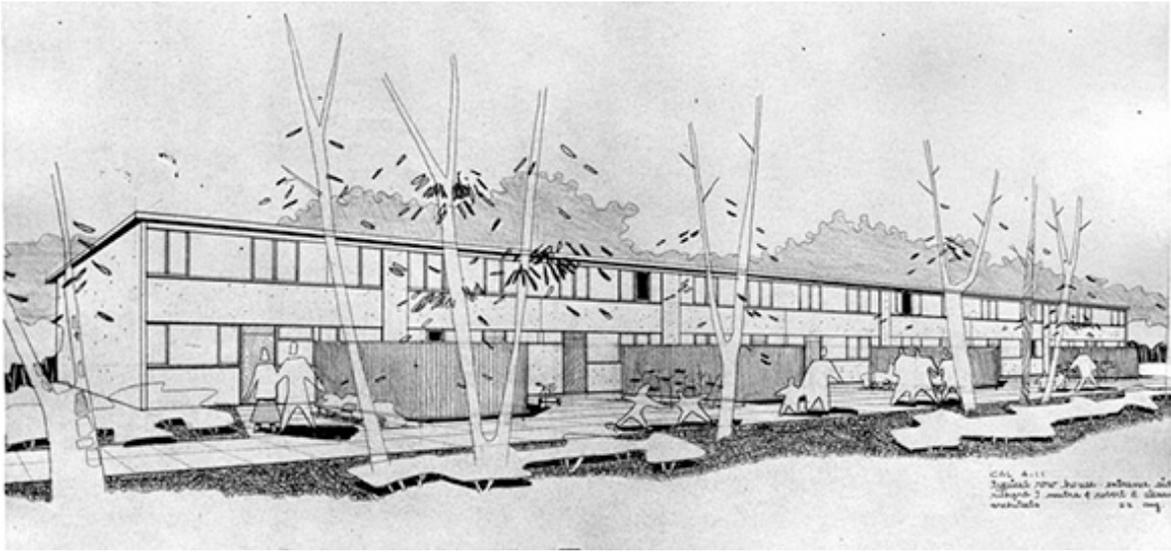


View of nearly completed Pueblo del Rio Housing Project | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

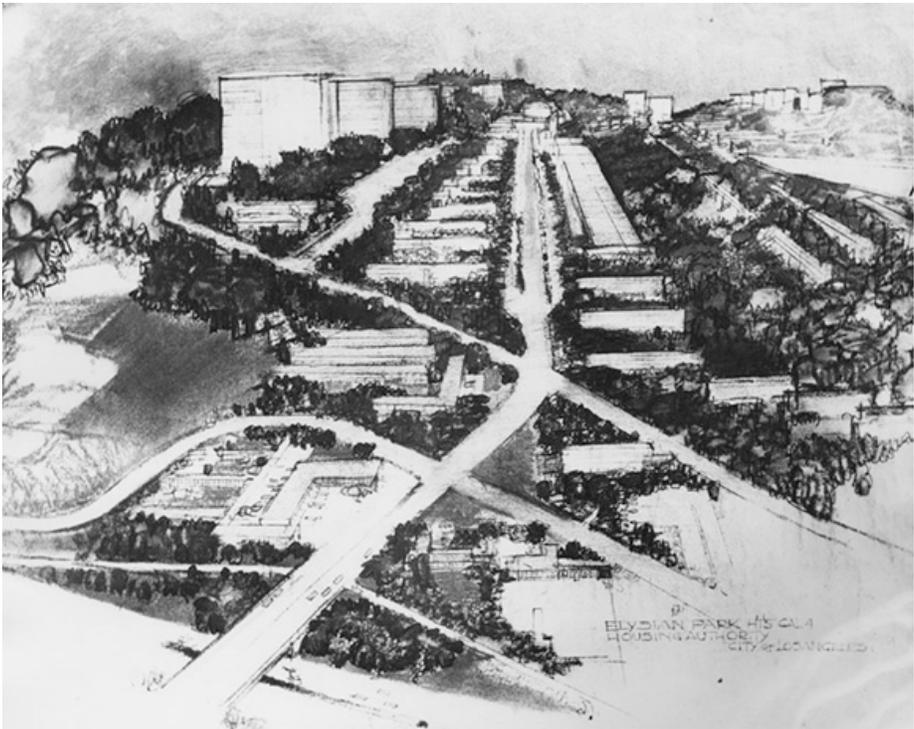


View of the newly constructed Pueblo Del Rio Housing Project | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

One of the most infamous examples of this witch-hunt is the story of Chavez Ravine. Located where Dodger Stadium and its parking lots now sit, the low-income neighborhood had been declared a slum and the Housing Authority commissioned Robert Alexander and Richard Neutra to design housing for the residents. Their stately design for what he named **Elysian Park Heights** included a mix of low- and high-rise housing in a parklike setting laced with gardens and trees, and terraced garden apartments landscaped for privacy. However, the project was derailed by the political firestorm. When Housing Authority employees protested, they were subsequently dismissed, blacklisted, and sent to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.⁶



Exterior of an proposed Park Elysian Heights housing project | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library



Exterior view of a proposed housing project for Elysian Heights | Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library

The last housing project constructed by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles was in 1955. With major federal and state funding gone, the city turned to voucher programs and leasing. Lacking a commitment to existing building maintenance and accompanying social services, however, many communities declined. There have been examples of innovative low-income housing in specific areas, like Santa Monica, in the ensuing decades, but nothing has come close to the scope of the midcentury expansion.

While the context of the midcentury differs radically from today, and low-income housing is not the same as permanent supportive housing for the homeless --these eras are linked by the classic Modernist notion that good and uplifting design is for everyone.

More on L.A. Housing

"Los Angeles has always been one of the leading contexts for experimentation with modernism--in many different types of buildings but absolutely with housing," says Maltzan. "I believe that this experimentation has now moved into multi-family

housing in the 21st century as the city gets denser and denser. I see the projects we're doing with the Skid Row Housing Trust as an extension of both that kind of experimental mindset and culture in Los Angeles, but also very much an extension of the Modernist project."

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Trust. Los Angeles still has work to do in both addressing its growing homeless population (the second largest in the nation), and the need for affordable housing amidst rising density and gentrification. But perhaps what's underway is paving a path toward an updated paradigm of "community modernism" for a new century.

While the Trust's focus is on Los Angeles, these trailblazing projects could ideally alter thinking about what the template and integration of affordable and supportive housing could look like on a global level. It's common for cities to pursue fame for the headline-grabbing architecture of massive sports stadiums, skyscrapers, or radical cultural centers. What would it mean for Los Angeles to become known for a successful and sustainable network of beautiful housing projects for its most vulnerable citizens? At the very least, it would result in a unique form of civic pride--one that would stem from living in a more equitable, and thus more vibrant city.

Notes:

¹See the Paul Williams [website](#).

²Amity Compton was never realized. Due to the war, it became Channel Heights near the Los Angeles Harbor to house defense workers. Some of Neutra's design elements remained, but much had to be altered. See Thomas Hines, "A Dream for Low-Cost Housing that Went Astray," *LA Times*, June 21, 1992.

³See Dana Cuff's *The Provisional City* (MIT Press, 2001).

⁴Quote by Thomas Sugrue, in Don Parson's *Making a Better World: Public Housing, the Red Scare, and the Direction of Modern Los Angeles* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005) p. 188. Parson's book provides a thorough study of the political landscape of this era.

⁵The unsuccessful mayoral candidate was Mayor Fletcher Bowron. See Eric Avila's *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2004), pgs. 38-40.

⁶For an introduction to this fascinating and complicated history, I recommend [this video](#).



A New Housing Model at the New Genesis

by Ryan Vaillancourt

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - When Erica Thompson heard about the New Genesis, an affordable housing complex then under construction near Fifth and Main streets, the aspiring songwriter jumped at the chance to snag one of the subsidized rooms.

With an annual income below \$35,460, Thompson qualified for one of the 24 apartments reserved for individuals who want to live in the \$22.3 million building a block south of the Old Bank District's busiest corner, but who can't afford prevailing market rate rents. She now pays \$738 a month for her 400-square-foot unit. The fee includes utilities and an onsite parking space.

Like most deals, it came with a catch, though many would consider the catch to be more of a glaring red flag: Of the 104 apartments in the building, 79 are reserved for people who were recently homeless and who suffer from a physical disability or mental illness.

Thompson was undeterred.

"People have fears because of the stigma of mental disability, but for them to go through the whole process of even getting in here, there has to be some stability mentally," Thompson said. "And it was such a good deal as well that I couldn't pass it up, even if I had an issue with it."

Like developer Skid Row Housing Trust's last four projects, the New Genesis is considered supportive housing because it includes onsite social services. Tenants access everything from medical care to drug counseling to mental health treatment without leaving the building.

The New Genesis represents a distinct evolution in the nonprofit's model. To qualify for a unit in Skid Row Housing Trust buildings such as the New Carver, the Rainbow or the Abbey apartments, tenants had to have been homeless for a year or more, and needed to have a documented disability. The restrictions ensure that the subsidized apartments are filled by those who most need them.

With the New Genesis, however, the SRHT's core demographic is joined by neighbors who simply need a less expensive place to live. Some of them will reside in five larger units in the building branded as "artist lofts." The apartments range from 567 to 770 square feet and include mezzanine levels. The loft units rent for \$949 (the rate goes up slightly if there are two or, at most, three people living there).

Part of the organization's move toward a mixed income project was inspired by its tenants in other buildings, said Mike Alvidrez, SRHT's executive director.

"Many of them expressed that they don't want to be identified as a 'Skid Row person,'" Alvidrez said. "They want to participate in a more diverse Downtown, which is what most other people who live in Downtown want."

The New Norm

Jonathan Hunter, a managing director with the nonprofit Corporation for Supportive Housing, which arranges financing for supportive housing projects nationwide, said the practice of mixing units for the formerly homeless with traditional affordable apartments has been happening in cities such as New York and San Francisco for at least 15 years. Recently, he said, the trend has become more widespread.

While part of the driving force of the mixed-income model stems from a desire not to "ghettoize" tenants, the change is also driven by economics.

Many people living on the streets survive on federal Supplemental Security Income, which in Los Angeles County works out to about \$8,860 a year (15% of the Area Median Income of \$59,100). The difference between what an individual on SSI can pay in rent and the cost of operating their apartment is "enormous," Hunter said.

So, including a low-income component reserved for people earning closer to 60% of the AMI not only makes for a more integrated community, it also generates crucial additional revenue for the project.

The New Genesis model was also partly driven by community input. When the project was being planned, the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council and the Historic Downtown Los Angeles Business Improvement District opposed building more

very low income housing on Main Street. The corridor has emerged in recent years as a popular spot for loft dwellers and visitors to the hub's bars, restaurants and other businesses.

The community groups instead urged SRHT to pursue an affordability mix.

"We felt that it was appropriate to build new housing when there are a lot of people living on the sidewalk," said Russell Brown, who at the time led both DLANC and the HDLABID. "But at the same time, do you want to concentrate more and more people and more and more social services Downtown and not also have a balanced approach in every neighborhood in the city?"

Community groups also wanted more commercial activity to continue Main Street's momentum. A housing project with social services on the ground floor would deaden another stretch, Brown said.

Partly to engender community support, and partly because it fit within their own direction toward mixed income apartments, SRHT opted to locate the onsite social services in the rear of the New Genesis. Two street-facing retail spaces have been leased, one to ice cream shop Peddler's Creamery and the other to Great Balls on Tires, which would be a brick and mortar outpost of a popular food truck (the eatery is awaiting a Zoning Administrator decision on a controversial liquor license application).



Secure Design

New Genesis residents and visitors enter the six-story property from Main Street and step into a light-filled courtyard, which has become something of a design trademark for SRHT projects. Wade Killefer, a partner at Killefer Flammang Architects, which has designed four of the nonprofit's buildings, said it was conceived as a sort of security function.

Employees in a ground-floor security office can see almost every door in the complex, he said. It also has a quality of life element, as the flood of natural light will help the growth of a lush Queensland umbrella tree planted in the middle of the courtyard. Thanks in part to the courtyard, the New Genesis has a peaceful feeling to it, especially for residents like Floyd Cole.

Cole, 62, has stayed on and off the streets and at the New Image Homeless Shelter in South Los Angeles since 2003. He ended up homeless after he fractured his neck in a car accident and felt he had become too much of a burden on his family. On the streets, he turned to drugs and alcohol.

Now sober, Cole moved into the New Genesis last week.

"I love it because I'm up on the sixth floor and once I close my windows I can't hear the outside," he said. "I don't hear the yelling, the horns, nothing."

Tenants are slated to continue move-ins through November. All of the supportive housing units have been leased, though some of the low-income residences remain available.

Contact Ryan Vaillancourt at ryan@downtownnews.com.
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AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCE

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GAINING GROUND

With potential cost savings and increased quality control, modular construction is on the rise among affordable housing developers

My Micro NY will be the first multi-unit building in Manhattan using modular construction. The project, which is scheduled to start construction by the end of this year, will create 55 micro units.

MOD SQUAD

Modular's many benefits are catching on with affordable housing developers

BY DONNA KIMURA

From the New York City skyline to the blue skies of Los Angeles, several affordable housing developments are rising section by section using modular construction.

They include the sweeping Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn, which is kicking off with a 363-unit structure that, at 32 stories, will be the world's tallest modular building; and a pilot micro-unit development in Manhattan that aims to fill the needs of a growing number of people living alone.

On the West Coast, the dramatic Star Apartments in L.A. is about to open its doors to 100 formerly homeless individuals who have been among the city's highest utilizers of emergency rooms and other public services.

The size and scope of these developments may kick open the door for other affordable housing projects.

"What modular can be used for has changed," says Tom O'Hara, director of business development at Capsys, a modular manufacturer based in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. "It's an evolutionary process when you come up with a new system. People see other uses. We don't build a building that's different from anyone else's building. It's still a robust structural system."

Capsys has built 2,548 units of affordable housing, including single-family homes, duplex and triplex homes, seniors apartments, supportive housing, and multifamily properties.

O'Hara says the biggest benefit of modular construction is control. The materials, costs, and overall quality are carefully monitored in a factory setting.

In general, modular housing involves sectional prefabricated buildings that are built inside a factory and then transported to the site, where they're assembled on

RENDERING: COURTESY OF ARCHITECTS

a foundation. Modules can be placed side by side or stacked on top of each other like Lego bricks to create a building.

One convert is architect and developer Stuart Emmons of Emmons Modular, who recently designed the nine-unit Kah San Chako Haws development in Portland, Ore.

“We started at the depth of the recession and were competing with other

firms for funding,” he says. “We saw it as an interesting thing that might set us apart. That was the simple thing that seeded it. After I got into it, I liked it better and better.”

The \$1.7 million development was funded largely with tax increment financing from the city. The project’s studios are 375 square feet; one-bedroom units, 675; and two-bedroom units, 835.

In all, 15 individual modules were assembled to create the three-story project by the Native American Youth and Family Center.

Modular housing is built to the same code as site-built housing. “It’s the exact same materials and specifications,” says Tracey Daniels, communications director for the Modular Building Institute. “The only difference is that it’s built off site and



STAR APARTMENTS

The new Star Apartments in Los Angeles looks like no other structure.

Developed by Skid Row Housing Trust and designed by acclaimed architect Michael Maltzan, the 102-unit building is sleek and contemporary. It’s playful, something that may have emerged from an inspired afternoon of artfully working the left and right knobs of an Etch A Sketch.

“The technology had been evolving to the point where we wanted to see if this was going to be a new model for construction,” says Mike Alvidrez, executive director of Skid Row Housing Trust. “Resources are dwindling. Could we find ways to make the development process more efficient?”

Scheduled to open in November, the building will be home to 100 formerly homeless individuals, all high utilizers of emergency rooms and other services.

Modular construction emerged as a good option when the team decided to utilize the existing building. What was once a rooftop parking lot has been repurposed into 15,000 square feet of community space, including a walking track, basketball court, and gardens. Modular units are elevated on top.

The ground floor will be used as a health-care clinic by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

The \$21 million development uses low-income housing tax credit equity from National Equity Fund and investor Bank of America. The use of modular construction required Wells Fargo, the construction lender, to be flexible about its standard disbursement practices. This is because the modules required an accelerated drawdown on the construction loan to cover the front-end costs to manufacture the modular units.

TILDEN GARDENS

The 60-unit Tilden Gardens will provide housing for 45 homeless adults with mental health conditions and 15 young adults who are aging out of foster care. Under construction in Brooklyn, N.Y., the development is being built using modular construction.

The Bridge, a nonprofit agency that specializes in providing housing and mental health services, started construction on the project in March 2012 and expects to finish this coming February. DeLaCour & Ferrara Architects suggested modular construction for Tilden Gardens.

In an ideal situation, modular construction can shave considerable time off a construction schedule. However, this is the first time The Bridge and its team have worked with the product, so their schedule hasn’t shortened as originally hoped.

Coordination between the modular contractor and the general contractor is essential for the project to move ahead in a timely fashion. Once the modules are in place on site, coordination continues to be essential, since responsibilities frequently overlap.

It’s very technical, says Carole Gordon, senior vice president for housing development at The Bridge. “It’s a different set of skills, and you learn from experience,” she says.

Having general contractors experienced in modular construction is recommended.

The approximately \$13.7 million development was financed using tax-exempt bonds issued by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York and 4 percent LIHTCs from Enterprise Community Investment. The New York State Office of Mental Health is providing funds for rental subsidies, services, furniture, and equipment.

Assembling Tilden Gardens’ financing proved no more difficult than for any other affordable housing, Gordon says. She adds that she might consider developing another modular project.

“If it runs smoothly, it’s a good thing to do,” she says.



then transported and put together on site.”

Advocates say another advantage is time. While site preparation work is being done, the factory can be building the modules. Kah San Chako Haws was constructed in about five and a half months. When the time for design and permitting are added, the project took just over a year.

“I would like to see us at nine months,” says Emmons, who is looking at using mod-

ular construction for housing the homeless and other projects. “I don’t think I’m blowing smoke. I really think that’s possible.”

However, a few developers who recently used modular construction for the first time say their projects did not benefit from a shorter schedule because it took time to learn a new process.

Developers also have to be mindful that there may be a limited number of

trade workers experienced in constructing modular units in their areas. They may also run into transportation issues. Some factories have a limit on how far they like to deliver their modules.

Still, Emmons and others believe that modular housing offers a faster and better way to develop. They are optimistic that these buildings can be used to solve many affordable housing needs.



MY MICRO NY

Eyes will be on New York City when construction begins on the “My Micro NY” project near the end of the year. It will be the first multi-unit building in Manhattan developed using modular construction.

The 55-unit development is the winner of the adAPT NYC competition, which the city held to develop new micro-unit housing models. The pilot program was launched in response to the city’s changing demographics, specifically a growing number of one- and two-person households. New York City has 1.8 million of these households but only about 1 million studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Modular construction was not a requirement of the competition, but that’s what the winning team of Monadnock Development, Actors Fund Housing Development Corp., and nARCHITECTS has proposed. Its plans call for using modules built by Capsys at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

The team expects construction to last about 16 to 24 months. Conventional construction would take six to 12 months longer.

Under the pilot, Mayor Michael Bloomberg will waive certain zoning regulations for the project to be built on city-owned property. The units will average about 300 square feet when 400 square feet is typically required, says Ammr Vandal, project architect and associate at nARCHITECTS. Also, the ceilings will be nearly 10 feet, to make the apartments feel larger. Three different community space areas will be part of the building, including an eighth-floor deck.

Eleven units will be reserved for households earning no more than 80 percent of the AMI; five units will be at 145 percent of the AMI; and six units will be at 155 percent of the AMI. The remainder will be market rate.

ATLANTIC YARDS

In Brooklyn, N.Y., Forest City Ratner Cos. (FCRC) is at work on its ambitious Atlantic Yards development. The firm broke ground on the development’s first building, B2, last December. At 32 stories, it will be the world’s tallest modular building, and half of its 363 units will be affordable to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households when it is completed at the end of 2014.

“This site in particular was interesting for a modular solution,” says Melissa Burch, FCRC’s executive vice president for commercial and residential development.

In building a high-rise development in a market with high land costs, the firm was looking for new ways to be cost-effective and streamlined, she says.

FCRC has partnered with Skanska USA to create a new company, called FC + Skanska Modular, that is building the modular components at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

“We cracked the code on building modular in a high-rise application,” Burch says, noting that the team has developed new structural solutions for the project.

In all, Atlantic Yards will have 14 residential buildings. About a third of the 6,430 units will be affordable. The project will also include a major sports and entertainment arena as well as retail and office space. The early intention is to build all of the residential buildings using modular construction.

“We have an opportunity for critical mass,” Burch says. “It’s not just figuring out a solution for one building but for 6,000-plus units.”

Officials believe the costs for the first building will be marginally less expensive than for conventional construction. Once they get to the fifth or sixth building and become more efficient, however, they hope to see savings of approximately 25 percent.



With Star Apartments, Skid Row Gets a Stunning Housing Complex

By Eddie Kim | Posted: Monday, March 10, 2014 5:00 am

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - Skid Row's new Star Apartments may be affordable housing for the formerly homeless, but with its angular concrete supports in the middle of the building and the levels that seem to float in space, it is also one of the most striking structures to sprout in Downtown.

"We like the idea of building iconic structures that give residents a sense of pride in their home, and this is an important building for the community," said Dana Trujillo, housing development director at Skid Row Housing Trust, which developed the \$21 million complex at 240 E. Sixth St.

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Despite the aesthetic highlights, the Michael Maltzan-designed building's most intriguing element hides beneath its skin: It's the first and only low-income project in Downtown to be designed with prefabricated construction. Instead of building each level from floor to ceiling, the 102 units were assembled in Idaho by Guerdon Enterprises — complete with toilets, appliances and cabinets installed — and then trucked to Los Angeles, where they were lifted by crane into place on a concrete structure.

"They arrived as cubes with just the little utility connections sticking out," said Sasha Truong, project manager on the Star.

The Star, which broke ground in early 2012 and began move-ins late last year, provides approximately 350-square-foot residences for people identified by the county as being the "most vulnerable," often requiring emergency medical care and having a history of chronic homelessness. Each resident pays 30% of their income (or nothing if they have no income). Rents are subsidized by the city Housing Authority.

The project follows the permanent supportive housing model with a swath of on-site amenities and services, everything from offices for counseling and case management to an upcoming primary care clinic run by the county Department of Health Services. There is also a 15,000-square-foot open-air deck on the second floor.

The deck has space for exercise and art, as well as a lounge with comfortable leather chairs. A large kitchen and dining room provide space for lessons on cooking and diet, which will take advantage of the vegetables and fruits in the community garden just steps away. Last week, rows of bright red and yellow Swiss chard were growing next to radishes and a bevy of herbs.

"The building is very much a response to Skid Row Housing Trust's ambition to create the next generation of permanent supportive housing," said Maltzan, whose credits include a number of for-profit projects, including the upcoming \$160 million One Santa Fe in the Arts District.

Sitting on a Tray

Other Star amenities are coming, including a running track funded by the Aileen Getty Foundation. More significantly, the deck serves as a sort of experiment for SRHT. In addition to Star residents, it will be open to inhabitants of the organization's two dozen other Downtown properties.

It will likely happen in phases, Trujillo said, as SRHT has no idea how many people will show up and when.

“It could be a matter of scheduling different hours for residents from certain buildings to come by, but regardless, nearby residents are really excited to explore the space,” she stated.

The prefabricated units are not the only unique thing about the construction. The original property was a one-story building, and instead of tearing it down, the design simply poured a concrete super-structure over it, creating the large deck in the process. The units sit on a “tray” elevated by the structure's distinct angular concrete pillars.

The prefabrication approach improves the project's sustainability by eliminating much of the construction waste. Additionally, the units feature energy-efficient appliances and air-filtration systems. The stacking also results in improved insulation as the walls, floors and ceilings are essentially doubled up. Those achievements have propelled SRHT to apply for a LEED Platinum designation for the building.

Still, things were not always easy. While the developer saved money using prefabricated units, the design's complexity increased spending on installation. Despite that price hike, Trujillo classified it as a positive experience, and said other organizations and developers have been calling to glean information about how to pursue prefabricated construction.

“If we can get our costs of construction down and build more units for more people, that's a fabulous outcome,” Trujillo said. “We were happy to be the guinea pig even with the bumps and uphill climb.”

Meanwhile, the design is earning nods of approval. Will Wright, director of government and public affairs for the American Institute of Architects Los Angeles, lives a block from the Star and said the building's arrival does much to enliven the neighborhood, especially considering the drabness of the LAPD Central Division headquarters and a Department of Water and Power building across the street.

“Maltzan and his team took a difficult site and added a sense of urban grace to an area that desperately needs more love,” Wright said in an email.

Although the Star may prove precedent-setting in terms of design, the developer understands that future projects won't necessarily be easier.

With the Downtown real estate market heating up, Trujillo and SRHT Executive Director Mike Alvidrez worry that it will get progressively tougher to find sites and build in a financially viable manner. The Star suffered its own setback, after all: While the land was acquired in 2006, the recession pushed

construction back until 2012.

But the success of the Star, as well as SRHT's ongoing development of two other projects, bode well for the homeless community in Downtown, Alvidrez said.

"The Star is a catalyst for demonstrating creative solutions for ending homelessness, and in doing so multiplies the aspirational impact of this issue well beyond a single project," he said.

In that sense, there's optimism that Skid Row, and Downtown as a whole, will see more stars soon.

A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that rents for Star Apartments were subsidized by the county Housing Authority. The subsidies come from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

Downtown News regrets the error.

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Change Agent

If homeless people had a safe place to live, taxpayers could save millions

By providing housing to its homeless, Charlotte, N.C., saved \$1.8 million, research at the University of North Carolina–Charlotte found.



A homeless man sleeps using his recycled cans as a pillow at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City. Providing housing specifically for homeless people could save taxpayers millions of dollars, a new study suggests.

(Eduardo Munoz/Reuters)

By TakePart

posted March 31, 2014 at 11:26 am EDT

In a world where money talks, evidence that putting a roof over someone's head is a boon to city budgets could be the incentive cities need to build housing for the homeless.

Researchers at the University of North Carolina–Charlotte's Department of Social Work have found that housing constructed specifically for homeless people saved the city millions.

Providing housing at an 85-unit facility called Moore Place resulted in 447 fewer visits to emergency rooms and 372 fewer days spent in hospitals, *The Charlotte Observer* reported. That alone saved the city \$1.8 million—which makes plenty of sense. When people aren't exposed to danger from criminals or animals, and

they don't get sick from sleeping in a doorway on a cold night, they're bound to be healthier.

Law enforcement costs were also reduced. Providing housing to Moore Place residents resulted in an incredible "78 percent drop in arrests and 84 percent fewer days spent in jail."

Moore Place accommodates men and women who represent the millions of Americans affected by stubborn housing and employment problems that took hold during the Great Recession in 2007. They are folks who were living paycheck to paycheck, got laid off, couldn't find another position, and so lost their home. There are also residents who struggle with mental illness or drug and alcohol addictions.

Although other housing facilities often require tenants to be sober before moving in, Moore Place is grounded in the "housing first" concept. The idea is that individuals with mental health or addiction issues are more likely to be able to deal with those issues if they have a stable home base.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development puts the number of homeless last year at 610,000 people. Homelessness dropped 4 percent from 2012 to 2013, but given the cuts to food stamps and expired unemployment benefits, officials expect homelessness to become much worse in 2014. There's also the reality that those numbers don't include people crashing on relatives' couches or sleeping in their cars.

This isn't the first time giving people homes (instead of leaving them on the street or throwing them in jails) has seen success. A similar project in Colorado converted a correctional facility to housing for the homeless, and the same positive results were borne out.

Now that the Moore Place model has proved itself, government and nonprofit agencies plan to work together to offer "incentives to encourage more permanent supportive housing projects for the chronically homeless."

- *TakePart staff writer Liz Dwyer has written about race, parenting, and social justice for several national publications. She was previously education editor at GOOD.*

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