

# NAHMANews™

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS AND OWNERS

## NAHMA Salutes Developers and Managers at the Forefront of Affordable Housing

*Alexandria, Va., Aug. 22, 2019* — The National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) announces the winners of its annual Affordable Housing [Vanguard Awards](#). These awards recognize newly developed or significantly rehabbed affordable multifamily housing communities that showcase high-quality design and resourceful financing.

The excellence exhibited throughout these multifamily developments belies the notion that affordable housing cannot be assets to their communities. Vanguard Award winners deliver powerful proof that affordable housing done well can transform neighborhoods as well as the lives of individual residents.

Winners of the Affordable Housing Vanguard Awards will be recognized at an awards ceremony at the NAHMA Biannual Top Issues in Affordable Housing 2019 Fall Conference in October in Washington, D.C.

The 2019 winners are:

### **Vanguard Award for New Construction:**

Small Property (less than 100 units):

**Gateway North Apartments, Lynn, Mass.;** Management Company: Peabody Properties Inc.; Owner: Hub Holdings LLC, Boston, Mass.

Large Property (more than 100 units):

**Union Flats, St. Paul, Minn.;** Management Company: Dominion; Owner: Dominion, Plymouth, Minn.

### **Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of an Existing Rental Housing Community:**

**Quincy Tower Apartments, Boston, Mass.;** Management Company: Beacon Residential Management Limited Partnership; Owner: BC Quincy Tower LLC, Boston, Mass.

### **Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of a Historic Structure into Affordable Housing:**

**Millworks Lofts, Minneapolis, Minn.;** Management Company: Dominion; Owner: Dominion, Plymouth, Minn.

The Vanguard Awards:

- Demonstrate that exceptional new affordable housing is available across the country;
- Demonstrate that the affordable multifamily industry is and must be creative and innovative if such exceptional properties are to be built given the financial and other challenges to development;
- Highlight results of the private/public partnerships required to develop today's affordable housing; and
- Share ideas for unique design and financing mechanisms with industry practitioners to further stimulate creative development in the affordable multifamily industry.

The judges of this year's Vanguard Awards were distinguished NAHMA members from across the country: Jeff Baker, NAHP-e, Boston, Mass.; Nancy Evans, SHCM, NAHP-e, general manager, CSI Support & Development, Warren, Mich.; Michael Johnson, SHCM, NAHP-e, executive vice president, Alco Management Inc., Memphis, Tenn.; James McGrath, SHCM, NAHP-e, chairman, PRD Management Inc., Cherry Hill, N.J.; and Gianna Richards, SHCM, NAHP-e, president, Solari Enterprises Inc., Orange, Calif.

About the winners:

Located in the central downtown district of Lynn, Mass., 30 minutes outside of Boston, the **Gateway North Apartments**, a 71-unit, mixed-use development, has transformed a formerly vacant site into a community asset. Resulting from a 2008 master plan, and a nine-year planning, permitting and financing effort, the project is the first-ever multifamily property funded by Massachusetts' Workforce Housing Initiative and fills a market gap with high-quality homes for low- and middle-income households.

The project has been designed and built to meet all accessibility requirements, including the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regulations. With a facade including shingle and clapboard siding that reflects a classic New England vernacular, The Architectural Team's design for Gateway North Apartments creates a fresh yet contextual presence in the heart of Lynn's Central Square neighborhood. Paramount to the design concept, strategic decisions were made using best design practices and programmatic layouts; something that market-rate properties are known for—creatively executed within the parameters of the budget.

Located on a prominent corner site, just blocks from a commuter rail station, the carefully scaled six-story structure offers ground-floor commercial space and responds to its sensitive flood plain location with a landscaped and fully elevated podium form. The existing grade on the site was raised prior to construction of the building. This increases the climate resiliency of the project by keeping it above the base flood elevation established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The first floor, including the retail space, is approximately six feet above Washington Street. Inside, a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units combine bright pops of color with warm, muted tones and high-end finishes for a contemporary, upscale feel. The lobby and common areas feature bold art installations and custom pendant lighting fixtures, while the amenity program includes a large central space with two-sided fireplace and communal kitchen open to both residents and the community at large. A smaller-scaled resident lounge space, a fitness center, a combined café/coffee shop and a landscaped outdoor patio round out the space.

The main goal for the development of **Union Flats** in St. Paul, Minn., was to provide quality, affordable housing in an underserved area and revitalize the surrounding neighborhood in the process. Union Flats brings 217 new affordable apartment homes to a neighborhood with little to no affordable housing options.

Not only did the area need affordable housing, it also needed a structure to dynamically connect to the transit-oriented nature of the area. Union Flats accomplished this by providing a bike lounge and repair shop along with surplus bicycle storage that is free-of-charge to the residents. The development also improved pedestrian walkways surrounding its property.

The area is going through a revitalization period. To be consistent with the existing mostly industrial neighborhood, the design vision behind Union Flats was to mix old with new. Union Flats contributes to the overall community revitalization through design by combining timeless features and new trends.

Union Flats is a bright and colorful U-shaped building that allows for a great central courtyard on which all the amenity spaces are focused. A grand staircase welcomes residents and guests into the building. Glass on all sides of the common area allows for the residents to view into the space as well as see through to the exterior amenities.

The interior common areas feature a large art installation of paint cans bringing color and dimension to the space. This installation provides the connection to all colors seen throughout the building.

The large lobby opens directly into the clubroom for flexibility in hosting events for residents and guests. The clubroom has an orange metal fireplace dividing the space for multiple groups to utilize. A large kitchen flanked by built-in booths provides a great space for working and socializing.

The clubroom opens onto the interior courtyard allowing access to the pool, grilling stations and fire pits. A sculptural playground provides the backdrop to the entire courtyard. An expansive fitness and yoga room round out the first-floor amenities near the leasing office.

The bike room allows residents to store bikes and equipment, as well as provides workshop space for fixing bikes. Direct access to the outdoors allows residents to head out on a ride in the local neighborhood or to the nearby light rail station.

**Quincy Tower Apartments** was born of the partnership of Jung Brannen Architects and Stanley Chen, a local developer who sought to provide affordable housing for aging residents of Boston's Chinatown community. Together, they built the 16-story, 161-unit high-rise community in 1977. The developers envisioned a vibrant, affordable community with specialized services for the elderly. The property includes a staff apartment, spacious lobby, community room and kitchen, courtyard, computer learning center, laundry, greenhouse and office space for management and program staff. Quincy Tower also created space to house senior services and programming staff, including the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center (GAC), a community nonprofit.

The scope of the \$12 million renovation included extensive facade repairs; greenhouse repairs; a new roof; basement repairs to prevent water intrusion; a new groundwater recharge system; new storefront/entry systems at common areas; new boilers, hot water heaters and exhaust flue; new elevators; new trash chute; new life safety systems; new intercom and expanded security system; bringing units and common areas into accessibility compliance; new unit kitchens and bathrooms; new finishes and lighting throughout common areas, including hallways and stairwells; new signage and landscaping; and design elements taken from Chinese cultural symbols.

The finish color palate is mostly neutral—creams, whites, sables—with variations in texture rather than color. The floors and some walls are tile. Small marble-topped tables can be sprinkled throughout or configured into a coffee table. "Plyboo" (a bamboo architectural plywood) and Chemetal (a metal laminate) walls are sparingly but strategically used. Tall white ceramic planters are topped with orchids.

There is an interior courtyard with a waterfall fountain, enhanced with stone, trees, plants and bench seating in the Chinese architectural style. Artwork mirrors the themes of nature and serenity.

Residents requested to have gold incorporated into the design, so it was used to add sparkle, primarily in brass light fixtures with small bulbs that twinkle rather than wash with light. The rooftop greenhouse was renovated so that residents may cultivate their plants year-round. Corten planters of Hinoki cypress were placed by the building entry.

Few historically significant buildings still stand along the Hiawatha corridor, a once prominent milling and manufacturing area in Minneapolis, Minn. One of these sites is the historic location of Lake Street Sash & Door Company, now repurposed as **Millworks Lofts**.

The project was inspired by Dominion Vice President and Project Partner Nick Anderson's college project, which modeled turning the Lake Street Sash & Door Company building into affordable housing units. When the property became available, Dominion looked to Anderson to turn his vision into a reality.

Millworks Lofts stands with much of its historical integrity in place while still providing beautiful, modern housing. Units, amenity spaces and parking were incorporated while preserving the existing structures. The loft plans were designed to highlight the timber columns and existing window openings. Units are organized along a central spine anchored by an existing elevator shaft, which has been repurposed into a light well and a new vertical connecting staircase on the other end. While the elevator no longer met code, original gates, switches, cables and counterweights remain in place as a design element. The new staircase became a focal point and gathering space.

Common areas were strategically designed to highlight the historical aspects of the building, most notably within the tree-like columns that support the roof of the lumber sheds. The main clubroom occupies the former loading dock where suspended light pendants hang at various heights from the original steel trusses, in imitation of a starry night.

The brick walls, wood ceilings and concrete floors are intact and the building design is intentionally industrial to reflect the working-class roots of the neighborhood.

Apartment amenities include private balconies and patios, in-unit washers and dryers, kitchen bars and islands, stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops, 12- to 14-foot ceilings and large windows. Community amenities include a fitness center and yoga studio, rooftop deck with views of downtown Minneapolis, a community room with a fireplace and a landscaped outdoor seating area.

For additional details on the NAHMA Vanguard Award winners and program, visit <https://www.nahma.org/awards-contests/vanguard-award/>.

NAHMA is the leading voice for affordable housing management, advocating on behalf of multifamily property managers and owners whose mission is to provide quality affordable housing. NAHMA supports legislative and regulatory policy that promotes the development and preservation of decent and safe affordable housing, is a vital resource for technical education and information and fosters strategic relations between government and industry. NAHMA's membership represents 75% of the affordable housing industry, and includes its most distinguished multifamily owners and management companies. Visit [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org) for more information.

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