

CITY ARTS
APARTMENTS

**NAHMA 2011
Affordable Housing
Vanguard Award**

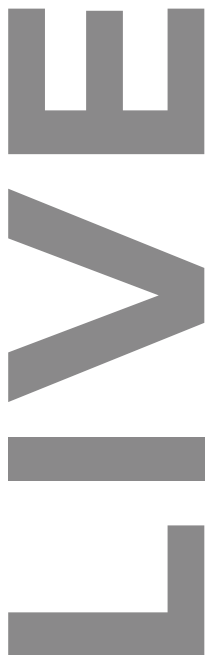


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NAME OF PROPERTY:

Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

Property Manager:

Entry Contact and Title:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

NAME OF MANAGEMENT COMPANY:

Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

Contact and Title:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Management company is a ☐ non-profit entity ☐ for-profit entity.

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The following information is required in all categories.

Vanguard Award Category:

Type of financing or subsidy (list all):

Number of units:

Original age of property (if applicable):

Completion date of new construction or major rehab project:

Type of housing (e.g. garden-style, high-rise):

Check one: ☐ Rural Suburban ☐ Urban

Please identify your AHMA:

IS YOUR ENTRY COMPLETE?

- ☐ Submit your entry fee online (noting Property Name) at www.nahma.org/store, or mail to NAHMA (see page 2)
- ☐ Complete this page (Contact Info form), and "save as" new file name to become your Application PDF; be sure to indicate the category in which you are competing
- ☐ Complete the essay, save as PDF and attach to your Application PDF
- ☐ Include photos as inserts or saved as PDF pages and attach to your Application PDF
- ☐ Include testimonials converted to PDF pages and attach to your Application PDF
- ☐ Provide Green Building Awards info saved as PDF page(s) and attach to your Application PDF
- ☐ List other awards and save as PDF page(s) and attach to your Application PDF
- ☐ Submit your Application PDF to NAHMA by April 15 (see page 2)



CITY ARTS APARTMENTS

What was the main goal of the development project?

City Arts was intended to provide integrated affordable housing for a wide array of artists in the Station North Arts District of Baltimore, Maryland. The neighborhood, characterized by old loft apartments, galleries, and art training institutions is a priority of the city to transform into an arts and entertainment center. There has been no new residential development in the Greenmount West Community, a subsection of the Station North Arts District, since the early 1900s, yet there is a growing demand for housing by artists that work in the community or attend the nearby Maryland Institute of Arts College. City Arts also was intended to provide a place for working artists to display and sell their work in the first floor gallery. Apartments are designed in a loft style to provide open space and light for artists to work. There also is community work space within the building which residents may use.

Was the main goal met and how was this determined?

The goal to provide artist housing was very clearly met. All 58 apartments for which artists were given a priority were rented to artists within 4 months of project completion. There were 11 apartments set aside for very low income persons with disabilities and those apartments also were rented in the 3 month period.

A very unique aspect of the project is how the artist residents were defined and selected. To receive preference artists wanting to live in City Arts had to be working professional artists who made at least some, but not necessarily all, of their income from their art. The challenge of implementing that selection policy was handled by a resident selection committee made up of several professional area artists, a representative of Winn Residential, and representatives of Jubilee and Homes for America, two of three nonprofit developers of the project. The selection committee needed to see proof the artists had income from their art and practiced a skill that was artistic. Prospective residents came to be interviewed bringing portfolios and other samples of their work or even demonstrated their art form.

We had originally anticipated that the artists would be the more traditional painters, musicians and actors, but we got quite an amazing array of other artists-- writers, poets, singers and other performance artists, photographers, sculptors, graphic designers, dancers, potters, and someone who creates her own line of handbags and jewelry. Even with this fairly restrictive preference for working artists, all of the 58 units not set aside for the persons with disabilities were filled by those meeting the artistic requirements. The building was fully occupied in a very short time.

Since opening the beginning of December, the gallery has held three very well attended shows. The first two shows displayed works of resident artists and the third was curated by a resident showing the work of two non-resident artists.

Strong support has been provided by a huge range of local groups and organizations and the City. Support and assistance was provided by the Baltimore Mayor, the Housing Department and a half a dozen other Baltimore agencies. Five community organizations and community association coalitions provided their support. Cultural and artistic organizations provided numerous letters as did supportive service agencies who want to support the project and offered assistance with various resident services.



All and all, there was a tremendous outpouring of support and enthusiasm for the project. Financial assistance was provided by the State of Maryland and Section 8 assistance came from the City of Baltimore.

What were the major challenges in developing the property and how were they overcome?

This project was awarded tax credits in the spring of 2009 and faced many financing challenges including a initial gap of over \$2.5 million dollars, the need to find an investor for the tax credits and the need for a permanent lender in an extremely difficult economic environment. The gap was ultimately filled by additional federal funding. There also were challenging development issues including a site with significant environmental issues and very little space to comply with Maryland's newly adopted stringent storm water management regulations.

Environmental Issues

The site was acquired from the City of Baltimore through a request for proposals. The acquisition agreement permitted the developer to have a reduced price in order to compensate for the environmental remediation required. Originally the site housed a greenhouse likely for the neighboring Greenmount Cemetery and in 1914 became home to the Lord Baltimore Press Printing Lithography and Paper Box Manufacturing Company. After the printing company closed the City of Baltimore bought the site and operated the Department of Public Welfare from the building. The building was demolished in 2005, but two 6,000 gallon underground storage tanks remained on site. The prior uses resulted in significant arsenic (naturally occurring) and petroleum in the ground water. The developer entered into a voluntary cleanup program with the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE). The cleanup involved removing significant amounts of soil from the site, transporting it off site to a facility that would accept contaminated soil, and bringing new clean soil on site. The building and parking lot essentially encapsulate the site and no disruption can occur without approval by MDE. The owner is released from future liability for environmental issues as long as it complies with the MDE approved plan. The owner must maintain the integrity of the building slab and all asphalt and concrete areas. Regular maintenance must be performed and written records documenting maintenance must be maintained.

Storm Water Management

Maryland adopted new storm water regulations which require all storm water and runoff to be cleaned before it enters public storm water systems. Previously urban projects did not have on site storm water management requirements. These new requirements necessitated installing an underground system to manage water quality and store water to allow it to slowly enter the public storm drains.

Financing

The Maryland Community Development Awarded City Arts a tax credit allocation with a 30% basis boost since it is located in a Qualified Census Tract. Although the project was awarded tax credits it did not receive any low-interest Rental Housing Program funds from the State and initially had a significant gap. Within 3 months of the award Maryland received Tax Credit Assistance Program (TCAP) funds from HUD and had a competition to award those funds. City Arts received over \$2.6 million of TCAP funds. A long term relationship between Bank of America and Homes for America let to the bank providing construction financing, a permanent loan and purchase of the LIHTC.

What were the financing methods/tools used to develop the property? Was the development completed on time and within budget?

Perhaps one of the most unique features of this project's financing was that it was one of the earliest to use TCAP funds and get to a construction start. This made a useful contribution to the Obama Administration's need to demonstrate the prompt use and good benefits of the recovery programs. The HUD Secretary and other federal and Maryland appointed and elected officials visited the site to call attention to the project and the impact of the federal funding.

The project received a \$1,399,260 annual allocation of LIHTC which were syndicated by Enterprise Community Investments and sold to Bank of America to raise equity of \$9,312,495. Maryland DHCD provided a TCAP loan in the amount of \$2,635,000 Bank of America provided a \$1,300,000 permanent loan. Homes for America used the proceeds of a \$136,000 Maryland Energy Administration grant, administered through the Maryland DHCD, to make a loan for energy upgrades. The City of Baltimore provided the project based Section 8 subsidies to the 11 apartments designated for occupancy by persons with disabilities.

The project was completed 2 months ahead of schedule and was brought in \$294,000 under budget. The savings resulted primarily from not using the full amount of the construction contingency. The savings is expected to be approved to make an initial deposit to the property's reserve for replacement account rather than reducing any of the sources.

What are the major innovative design features of the property?

The design of City Arts is probably the thing which has captured the imagination of so many people and made it such a noteworthy development in the region. It is quite simply spectacular and unlike probably any other tax credit property in the nation, certainly in Maryland.

The brick façade building with the property name repeated as a banner around the top of the building is perfectly integrated into the neighborhood of warehouses and older buildings. Most visitors are surprised to realize the building is new construction because the design is so compatible with existing older structures in the community.

Some of the unique design features include a 1300 square foot gallery for resident artists, building wide free WiFi for residents, 1600 square foot of secured resident storage space, large community work space for resident artists, a fitness room, community lounge/tv room with computer facility, secured bike storage, and transit oriented development located within several blocks of Penn Station.

Apartments are open space design with hardwood floors and walls of floor to ceiling windows.

In addition to the beautiful designed housing with unique community spaces, the building was designed to be extremely energy efficient. It meets the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria. Some examples of special things that were done are the polished concrete floors in public spaces, hardwood floors in the units, outside dark sky lights, energy star lighting and appliances, low VOC paint and sealants and water saving plumbing devices.

How has the management team contributed to the ultimate success of the venture?

Hired Local Artist to Promote Building

WinnResidential hired a marketing coordinator who had recently graduated with a Masters of Arts in Community Arts from Maryland Institute College of Art, a prestigious Baltimore institution. The marketing coordinator was able to excite prospects about the potential of an artist building because she was genuinely excited about being a part of the building. The enthusiasm was contagious. She gave the team an advantage with an already established network to the market that the building was looking to connect with. The strategies of marketing the building in the artist community had to be original and creative. Hosting a booth at Artscape, the largest annual arts festival in a tri state area, was an ideal venue to hand out floor plans, brochures and paint brushes with labels promoting the website for City Arts. Unconventional outreach at gallery openings, music venues and local coffee shops contributed to the success of the lease up.

Created Presence in Neighborhood

Promoting the superior product that would be City Arts was the main goal and accomplishment of the management team during lease up. Winn interviewed potential spaces in the surrounding block to set up a temporary leasing office. Relationships with local retailers and restaurants were developed to legitimize our presence. We used directional signs, and an updated daily sandwich board to draw potential residents. In addition to hard hat tours of the nearly finished building, group tours were organized on weekends.

Managed Building Turnover

The management team is responsible for the transformation of City Arts from a construction site to a vibrant, lived in, artists' community. The Winn team at City Arts was able to transform a beautiful empty building into a home for 100 residents in less than 4 months. All sixty-nine apartments were occupied within 4 months of completion of the building. Winn has worked closely with contractors and construction to make sure that any and all physical loose ends have been tied up quickly and efficiently.

What the residents have to say:

"Mr. Walter (Maintenance Technician) is the most pleasant maintenance supervisor I've ever had in an apartment. I can count on him to be in the lobby at 9 every morning to greet me. It has really made a difference in some of my days!"

"When we had an issue with a neighbor making too much noise we brought it to management's attention and they took care of it immediately. We haven't had a problem since."

What are some of the major challenges in managing the property? How are the challenges overcome?

Income Qualification

The term "struggling artist" exists for a reason. Not all artists are able to make a living from their art and many work multiple odd jobs to support themselves. This can be a challenge when strict income guidelines are involved as they are at City Arts, a 100% tax credit property. Completing a tax credit application can be a daunting process for someone with an inconsistent means of income. The



(Income Qualifications continued) management team worked closely with applicants, employers and accountants to make the application process smooth for our future residents.

Limited Budget During Lease-Up

Due to the nature of leasing a building, City Arts was forced to operate on a portion of the budget of a fully occupied apartment building. The management team used non-traditional ways to continue to market the building on a limited budget. Using connections with a local college for the arts, the team was able to have a monthly email blast sent to the college's community of artists promoting City Arts. Paint brushes with the City Arts logo were distributed at local fairs and to prospects taking tours. Local restaurants, galleries and bookstores allowed City Arts to post flyers advertising the new building in Station North that everyone was curious about. Free online advertising sites such as Craigslist and Facebook that young people and artists are more likely to use as opposed to the paid advertising sites were updated daily.

Merging Two Populations

In addition to the 58 live/work spaces that City Arts offers for artists there are 11 apartments reserved for those considered disabled and non-elderly. It just so happens that several of the 11 residents have their own artistic drive and talent. Monthly "meet your neighbor" meetings have brought these two seemingly different populations together and highlighted their similarities. Every resident of City Arts is encouraged to take advantage or and take part in all that we have to offer.

Renting Challenges

Having a brand new product is typically a major asset in renting apartment homes but until the product is complete leasing can be a challenge. Leasing continued successfully in spite of the lack of a finished product to promote. Shop was set up in a vacant room in a furniture restoration studio one block away from the future City Arts. The team set up a temporary office in the heart of the arts district with bright and visible signage until the building was complete.

The management team did receive some criticism from local resident artists who didn't know the details of the project. A brand new building in an area where the community has grown and transformed organically can be seen as an unwanted invasion. Management worked to educate not only prospective residents but the Baltimore community on how City Arts would integrate with what already existed in the Station North Arts district.

City Arts is located at the gateway of the arts district in a still somewhat challenging yet up and coming neighborhood. Management has been working with local organizations to not only ensure success for City Arts but for the entire neighborhood. The community association is a vital part of this success. Residents who have chosen to stay in the Greenmount West community are invested in it and so is City Arts and the management team.

What are the innovative programs/services provided to residents?

Gallery Space

The gallery is the first thing that you notice as you approach City Arts. Its thirteen foot cornered wall of windows allows drivers and walkers by to have their curiosity peaked about what is inside. This gallery

(Gallery Space continued) belongs to the residents. There is a committee comprised of management, ownership and residents which chooses what work is shown in the gallery. Residents are responsible for maintaining and curating the 1200 square foot space.

Free Wireless Internet

Free wireless internet throughout the building, apartments and common spaces, is valued by the residents of City Arts for more than one reason. The internet has become a necessity for most but can seem expensive or out of reach for those on a limited budget. Having internet included in the monthly rent means one less bill to pay for residents. Wireless internet throughout the building means that residents are more likely to gather in one of 4 common area lounges to work together on a project that involves getting online.

Resident Services

Residents in City Arts present some unique challenges in the provisions of services. The artists are typically a younger group of 20-30 years old, all working at their art and most also working a second job. Most of these residents are interested in recreation, social and educational services. A second group of residents are non-elderly, very low income persons with disabilities with different resident service and support needs. City Arts has a service plan sensitive to the needs of both populations, but making sure that all of the residents are treated as a community as a whole.

City Arts offers its residents more than one way to stay fit. There's a gym with cardio and weight equipment that is open 24 hours a day seven days a week. The foosball table is a great way for residents to meet their neighbors with impromptu games being played at all hours of the day. In addition to traditional exercise equipment, free weekly yoga classes for residents take place in the common space. There is a large performance practice space that is available for use by musicians for jam sessions and for dance rehearsals. Resident artists are excited about the possibility of dancers dancing to live music while being photographed or drawn by their neighbors, all in the comfort of City Arts.

The lounge includes 40 inch LCD television for film screenings and computers and printers for the residents to use at any time. Tax workshops geared toward artists, a building book club and knitting club are just some of the opportunities for our residents to get involved and learn a new skill with their neighbors.

Additional examples of services offered:

- 'Get to Know Your Neighbor' party for all residents
- Assisting residents with setting up their phone lines and cable and signing up for energy provider programs to help save energy costs
- Information about free tax workshops being held in the neighborhood

How does the property integrate with, and meet the needs of, the surrounding community?

City Arts is located in the Station North Arts District of Baltimore which is home to numerous galleries, theatres, music venues and art schools such as the prestigious Maryland Institute College of Art. It is the first new construction, affordable, live/work housing of its kind in Baltimore. It gives people the chance to live comfortably and creatively at the same time. The gallery partners with other galleries in the



neighborhood for openings and exhibitions. City Arts is planning to be a participant in Station North Arts Festival, an event which aims to get the city's children interested in art, which takes place annually right outside of our front door. We also use local artists and vendors for designing and printing marketing materials for both leasing purposes and the promotion of the gallery.

City Arts is on the border of the less developed portion of East Baltimore. Fifteen percent of the apartments in the building are occupied by low income residents of Baltimore who qualify as disabled and who are not elderly. City Arts gives these Baltimore residents not only a place to live but the chance to be part of a community that is creating something positive for their city. Management was conscious of hiring locally, for both the artist/marketing coordinator position and maintenance. Hiring from within this neighborhood with little other opportunity for work has allowed City Arts to give back as well as to tie it to the community.

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March 31, 2011

Mr. Charles B. Duff, President
Jubilee Baltimore, Inc.
1228 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Arts
440 E. Oliver Street

Dear Mr. Duff:

On behalf of MICA, the Maryland Institute College of Art, I would like to offer my strong support for the nomination of City Arts for a Vanguard Award of the National Affordable Housing Management Association. MICA participated in the planning and marketing of City Arts, and we are delighted at its success.

Baltimore is becoming an arts center for the first time in its history. All of us at MICA are excited to be a part of this transformation, and we like to think that MICA is playing a role in bringing it about. But no school is big enough to revitalize an entire area in a major city. If we at MICA want to be part of a good community that can attract good students and retain good faculty, we need allies, partners, and good work. City Arts is all three.

City Arts has 69 apartments. All of them are affordable, through the terms of the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit, and will remain affordable for fifty years. This is vitally important. All over America, artists have been “discovering” blighted neighborhoods and making them flourish, only to be priced out by waves of richer people. City Arts is a first step towards the creation of a stable creative community within walking distance of the MICA campus. It shows that affordable housing can be compatible with neighborhood revitalization, and can indeed lead it.

The neighborhood around City Arts is daunting. Most buildings are vacant, and the area has been losing population for 30 years. The City Arts team showed great courage in undertaking this project. Fortunately, they also showed great skill. They produced a great building and leased it up roughly seven months ahead of schedule.

If any building in America deserves to win an award for good affordable housing, it is City Arts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Fred Lazarus, IV'.

Fred Lazarus, IV
President



New Greenmount West Community Association
Dale Hargraves, NGWCA President
408 E. Lanvale • Baltimore, MD 21202
410.905.3854
dalehargraves57@gmail.com

March 31, 2011

Mr. Charles B. Duff, President
Jubilee Baltimore, Inc.
1228 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Arts
440 E. Oliver Street

Dear Mr. Duff:

On behalf of the New Greenmount West Community Association (NGWCA,) I would like to offer my strong support for the nomination of City Arts for a Vanguard Award of the National Affordable Housing Management Association.

Greenmount West is the neighborhood around City Arts. Once a strong neighborhood, with thousands of residents and thousands of jobs, Greenmount West has lost almost all of its jobs and 2/3 of its residents in the past thirty years. It hasn't always been easy to stay hopeful and keep working here. But there is now some light at the end of the tunnel, and City Arts is the one of the first rays.

We wanted two things out of the development of the empty lot that has become City Arts: a good project, and benefit to the wider community. We defined a good project as a good-looking building that was affordable and that brought us neighbors without causing crime or parking woes. City Arts is a good project by all those measures, and better than we expected. We defined benefit to the wider community as jobs for residents and help with community projects. Here, too, we got what we wanted and more. The construction company hired several neighborhood residents, and the management company hired one of those residents as the permanent maintenance man for the building. The construction company gave a whole Saturday with lots of heavy equipment and helped us to improve and enlarge what is now the biggest and most productive community garden anywhere around here. And Jubilee devoted \$250,000 of their funds to the establishment of a permanent revolving loan fund for good projects in the neighborhood. This fund is a partnership between Jubilee and the NGWCA with both partners needing to agree on all loans. To date, we have made four loans, and the fund is about to help launch construction of our new community center.

Job well done! I hope you win what sounds like a very prestigious and deserved award.

Very truly yours,

Dale Hargrave, President



GREATER BALTIMORE CULTURAL ALLIANCE

March 31, 2011

Mr. Charles B. Duff, President
Jubilee Baltimore, Inc.
1228 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Arts
440 E. Oliver Street

Dear Charlie:

On behalf of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, I would like to offer my strong support for the nomination of City Arts for a Vanguard Award of the National Affordable Housing Management Association.

City Arts brings together in Baltimore three things that the City desperately needs: affordable housing, reinvestment, and a large number of creative people. It is wonderful to walk past this beautiful new building on land that was a vacant lot for more than thirty years. It is even more wonderful to talk with the residents and hear how delighted they are to be living there, and how much their new community means to them. It is wonderful to see the shows that residents are already putting on in the City Arts gallery. The City Arts management staff is working hard to turn this group of new residents into a real community of people, and they are obviously succeeding.

This is great news for Baltimore. After decades of decline, Baltimore is finally reviving, and the arts – and artists – are a big part of Baltimore's renaissance. One center of artistic activity in Baltimore is the Station North Arts & Entertainment District. Despite its grand-sounding title, Station North is a heavily disinvested piece of urban America and it takes a certain amount of courage (but also foresight) to live or invest in Station North. I have personally been working in Station North for four years, and we applaud the developers of City Arts for their willingness to invest more than \$10 million in a neighborhood where no one has invested anything for decades. Even more, we applaud the artists who have moved into City Arts. They are already active in their neighborhood association and joining in neighborhood projects with their neighbors, most of whom are poor and members of minority groups. They are building bridges between people of different races, ages, and levels of income and education. This is one of the key functions of the arts in America today, and the residents of City Arts are stepping up.

We at the GBCA are proud to have advised the developers and managers of City Arts on the design, construction, and management of the building. Our advice was generally heeded, and always taken seriously. This is an exemplary project and deserves national recognition.

Sincerely,


J. Buck Jabaily
Executive Director

CITY ARTS

APARTMENTS

Green Building Aspects

City Arts provides affordable housing opportunities for young artists to live and work in the vibrant Station North Arts district of Baltimore. Central to the design and concept for City Arts was to create a “green” building, a building that promotes environmental quality, economic vitality and tangible social benefits. The Enterprise Community Green Criteria was used as the guide to insure that strategies were employed to reduce the impact on water quality, air pollution, global warming and the depletion of the natural resources while lowering operating costs and maintenance costs.

The following green enhancements were designed into the site and building:

- Transit oriented development, excellent access to rail, light rail and bus transit
- Compact development 69 units on 1.23 acre site
- Proximity to services – City Arts is within ½ mile from schools, shopping, restaurants, entertainment, cafes, art galleries, and green space
- City Arts is located in a neighborhood that has connections to sidewalks to the greater community
- Site takes full advantage of passive solar heating and cooling
- City Arts is an adaptive reuse site of a contaminated site. The site successfully completed environmental remediation through the Voluntary Clean-up Program of the Maryland Department of the Environment
- Landscaping is planted with native or adaptive trees and shrubs that are appropriate to the climate, nor are they invasive species
- Thermal protection included spray polyurethane foam insulation in all exterior walls
- White TPO rubber roof
- Site is designed with underground storm water retention
- Windows are double hung, thermally broken and commercial grade, low e glass, argon gas filled
- All bath kitchen and common are plumbing fixtures are water saving
- All appliances with energy star labeling installed
- Energy efficient lighting throughout
- Energy star dark sky exterior light fixtures
- HVAC equipment has a SEER rating of 15
- Low VOC paints sealants and caulks used
- Hard wood floors installed in most of the living areas, green labeled carpet used in areas with carpet
- Kitchen and bath fans directly vented to the exterior
- Smoke-free buildings

CITY ARTS APARTMENTS

City Arts Award Summary

City Arts Honored December 2010 by the Central Baltimore Partnership

Honors are given once yearly to organizations which have had a great positive impact on the neighborhoods that comprise Central Baltimore. In addition to the long term effects that City Arts will have on the artist community, both Construction and Management made a special effort to hire locally and provide jobs at City Arts for unemployed residents of Greenmount West who were invested in their community.

In the few years since it was formed, the Central Baltimore Partnership has begun a dramatic transformation of the area north of Penn Station. The Partnership marshals the vision, commitment, talent and resources of virtually every organization with a stake in the area: neighborhood organizations, non-profits, educational institutions, private businesses and city government agencies. These partner organizations have united for a comprehensive community development strategy in Central Baltimore - an area that is roughly bordered by the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus to the north, Mt. Royal Avenue to the south, Greenmount Avenue to the east and Fallsway to the west. The Partnership fosters the art and sustainable development in healthy, transit-oriented neighborhoods at the center of the Baltimore region (Central Baltimore Partnership, April 2011).

City Arts Honored in Local Media Coverage

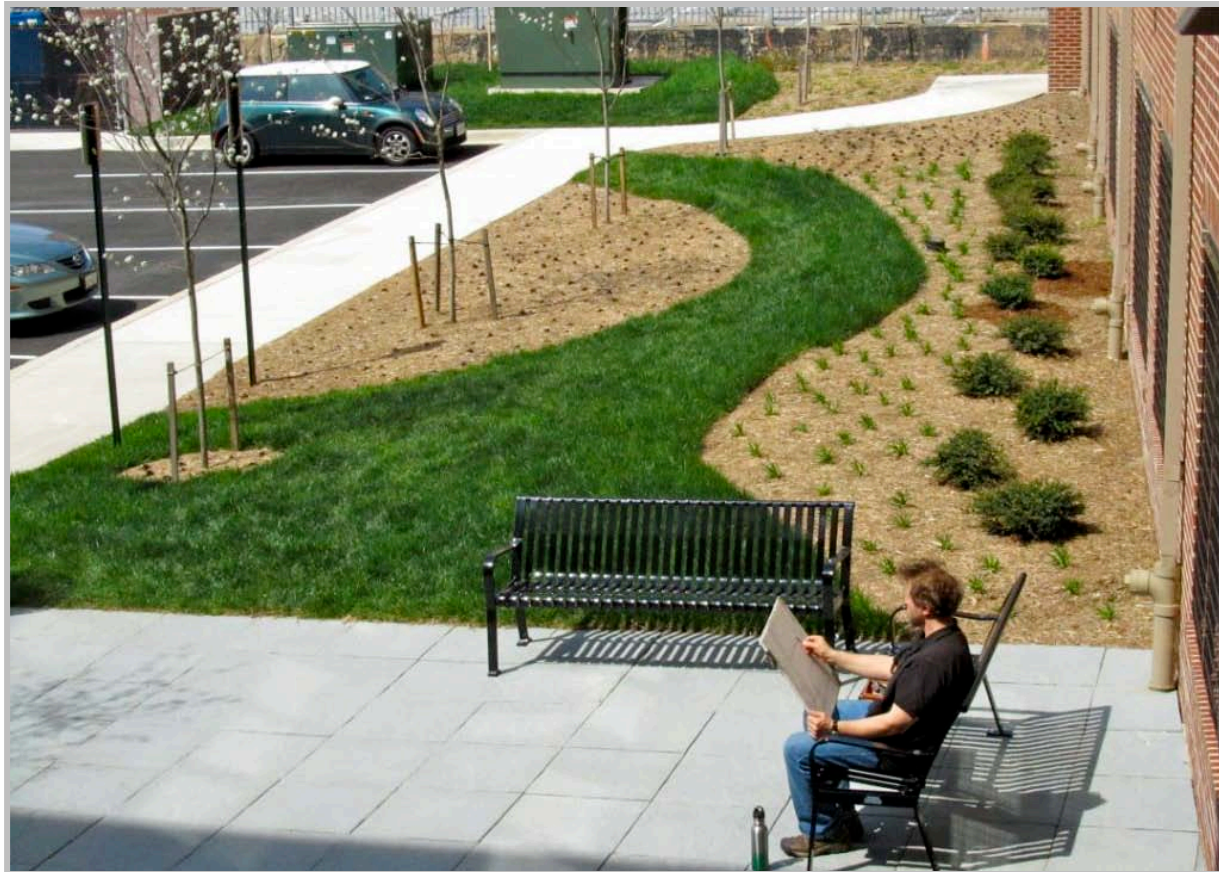
Since 2009, City Arts Apartments has been the subject of positive local press coverage. Please see the end of the award submission for examples.



City Arts exterior



Temporary City Arts management office during construction

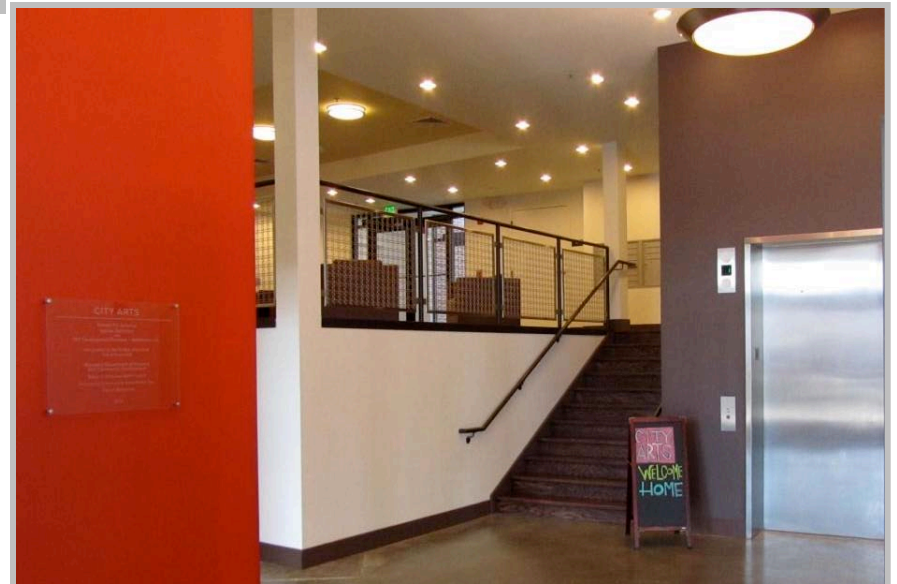


A resident sketches the urban landscape on the back patio



Foyer area during construction

Foyer area post-construction



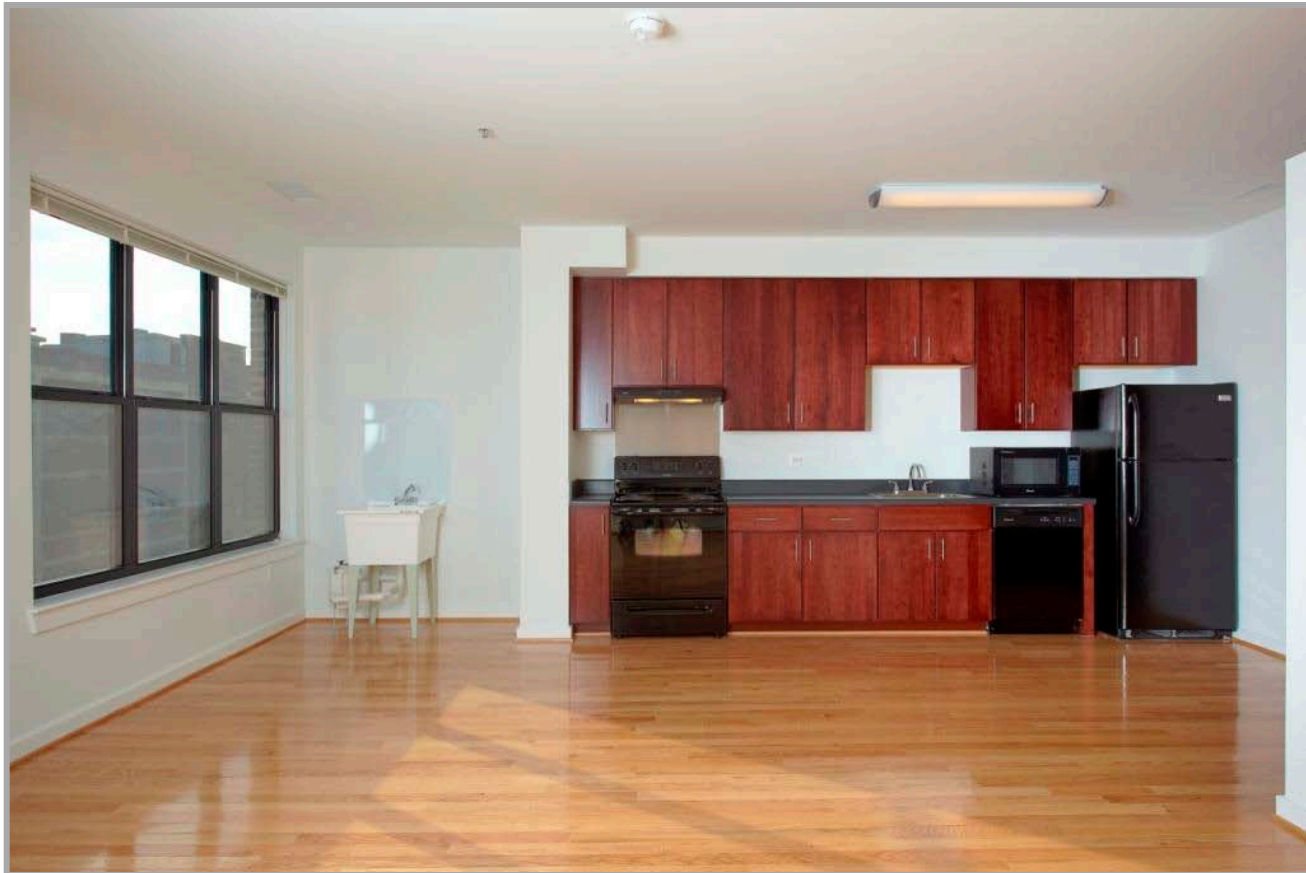


Culinary artists delight in the expansive, yet sleek and modern design of the kitchens

WE
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Hardwood floors reflect the abundant and natural light from the panoramic windows



The studio-loft layout is complete with a highly valued artist's slop sink



Spacious bedrooms feature picture windows and ceiling fans



Stylistic designs are shared
between both kitchen and
bathroom layouts



A resident artist records music in a airy and open studio-loft



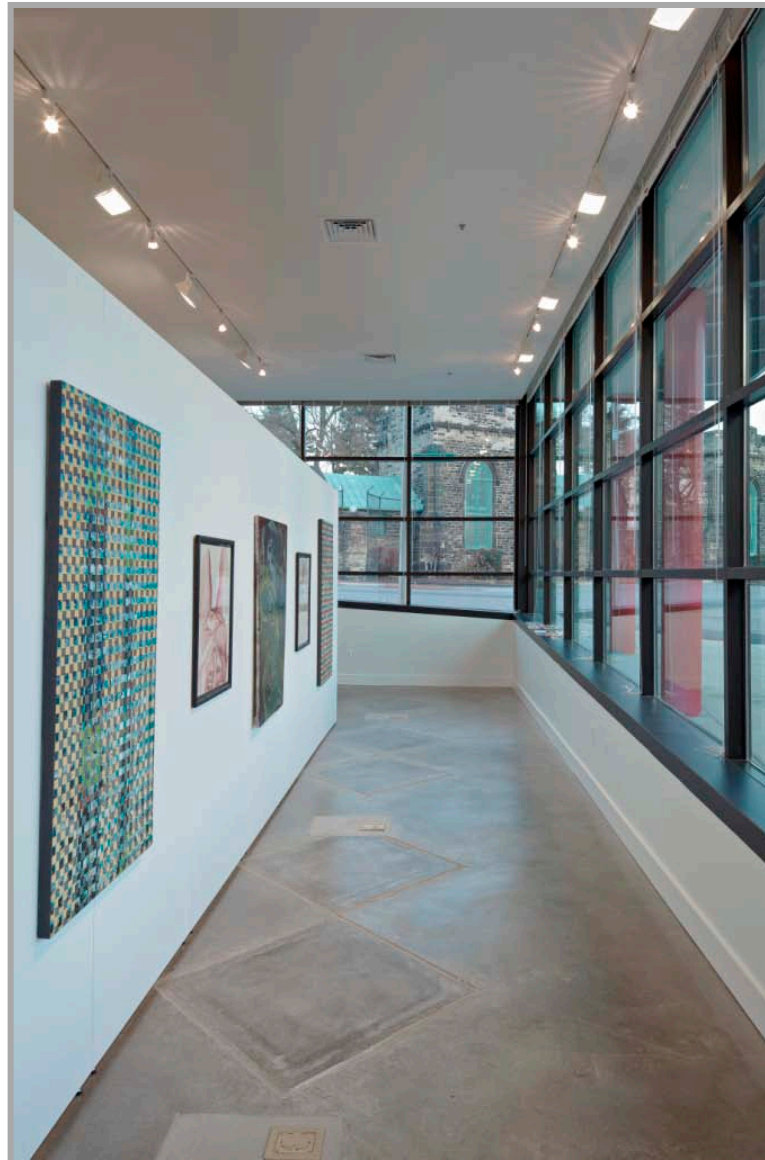
Resident resource rooms are used for film screenings and regular community meetings



Additional mezzanine lounge and seating area



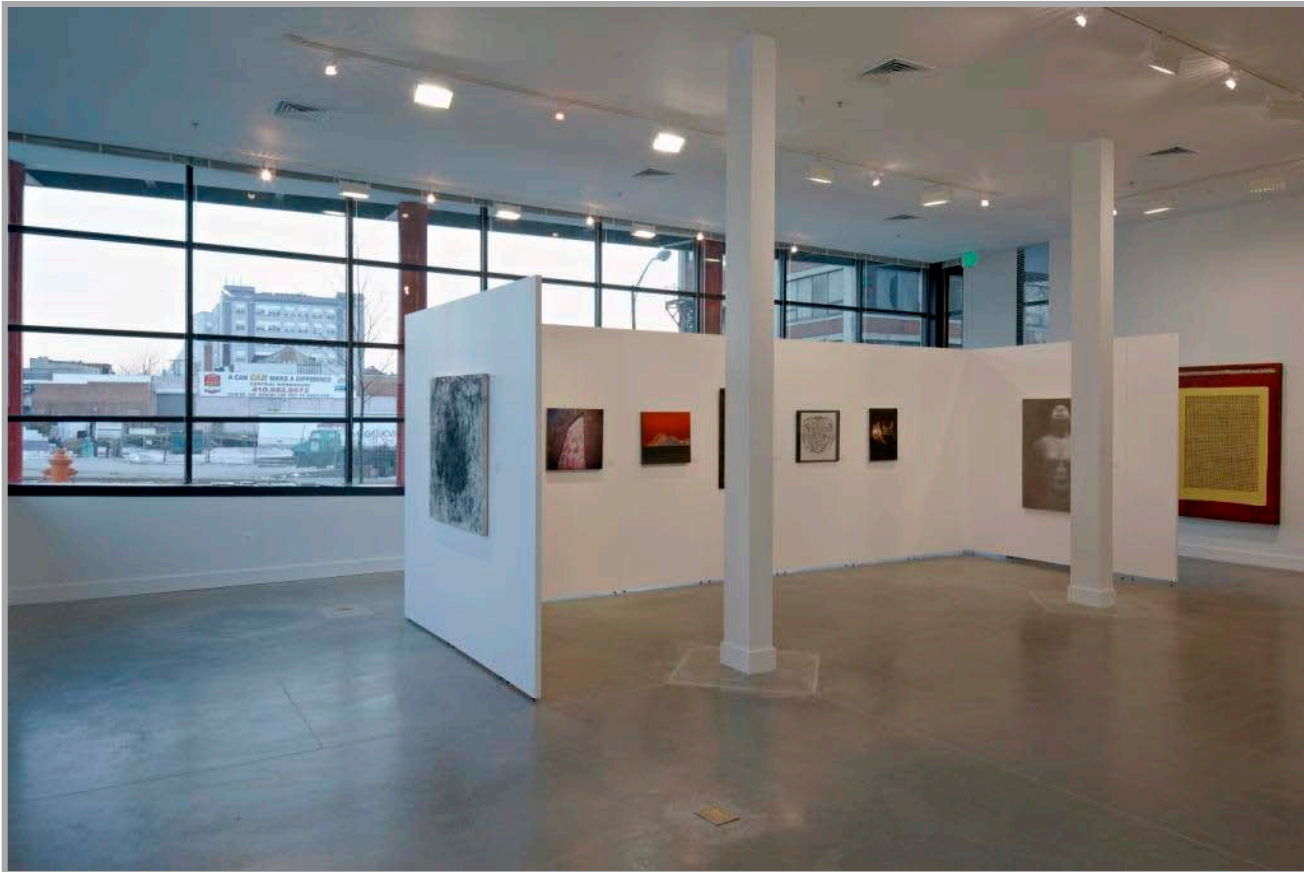
Oversized numbers and brightly painted accent walls bring excitement to the hallways



Storefront windows allow passersby the ability to enjoy the rotating exhibits



The gallery is well-lit in the evenings to help bring attention to the rotating exhibits



Works displayed in the gallery are supplied by resident artists



Moving panels can be designed to
accommodate rotating exhibits in the gallery



A sculptural installation utilizes the vast open space of the gallery



Storefront windows help promote community interest and engagement with the arts



City Arts grand opening party where the residents, friends, and families were able to mingle with management staff, ownership, and neighboring artists

Mdhousing's Blog

*Creating Homeowners, Preserving
Neighborhoods in Maryland*

Baltimore Celebrates Grand Opening of City Arts Apartments

Posted on [March 28, 2011](#) by [mdhousing](#)

MARCH 28



Baltimore – Secretary Skinner joined Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and other dignitaries for the grand opening of City Arts Apartments, a 69-unit, mixed use development geared for artists and their families.

The \$13.5 million building sits in the newly designated Station North Arts and Entertainment District in the Greenmount West neighborhood, a part of the city neglected by residential developers since the 19th century. Financing was made possible

through a \$2.6 million award from [Tax Credit Assistance Program](#), part of federal stimulus funding.

It was developed through a joint venture of three nonprofit organizations, Homes for America, Jubilee Housing and TRF Development.

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This entry was posted in [Affordable Housing](#), [Community Development](#), [Stimulus Funds](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

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One Response to *Baltimore Celebrates Grand Opening of City Arts Apartments*

Paul Littmann *says:*

March 29, 2011 at 11:39 am

Congratulations to all on this team. Great building, great project, and real asset to this community. Paul

[Reply](#)

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Baltimore Tax Credit Project Offers Low Rents in Arts District

A nonprofit joint venture led by Homes for America has completed the 69-unit City Arts low-income housing tax credit project in Baltimore's Station North arts and entertainment district and is marketing the project to income-eligible artists who live and work in the district. The co-developers of the \$13.4 million are Jubilee Baltimore and TRF Development.

Homes for America President Nancy Rase credits the other two partners for the idea of building a project that appeals to several thousand artists who live and work in the district, which includes the Maryland Institute College of Art. The college has supported construction of City Arts and economic development in the arts district.

Artists can receive an income tax credit for work generating revenue in the state-designated arts district, which also has a waiver of the state admissions and amusement tax. Building owners can get a property tax credit on qualified rehabilitation projects in the district.

City Arts qualifies as a transit-oriented development since it is three blocks from Penn Station, where light rail and Amtrak connections are located. The parking lot has only 40 spaces, and the building has a 230-square-foot indoor bicycle storage area. The four-story building sits on a compact 1.2-acre lot.

Rase reported "a huge amount of interest" in City Arts, which is the only newly constructed residential building in the arts district. Most artists in the Station North district live in old warehouse buildings converted to lofts, she said, "and some would just like to live in a new place."

Art Gallery

"This is one of the more physically dramatic things we have done," said Rase. The building has a 1,350-square-foot art gallery on the first floor, which was not included in the tax credit basis. The building also has community space for meetings and a computer room. The architect is Baltimore-based Hord Coplan Macht, and Winn Residential is the property manager.

Consulting with the artist community, the developers found that there was a lack of useful gallery space where artists could show their work. Like the rest of the building, the gallery space has an open design with plenty of natural lighting.

An advisory group consisting primarily of artists has been formed to help manage the gallery, although the property manager has responsibility for coordinating the schedule. The building has proven so popular that several community groups have asked to hold receptions at the gallery, Rase said.

There is also a work space for artists in the basement. Building residents will decide whether this will be leased to residents or used as a cooperative space.

Apartment Configuration

The 69 apartments include nine two-bedroom and 60 one-bedroom units. The one-bedroom units have an average of 700 square feet, while the two-bedroom units average 1,073 square feet. The loft design makes use of high ceilings and large windows that let in natural light, and there are oak floors in living areas except for the carpeted bedrooms. The hardwood floors aren't typical for tax credit projects that Homes for America has developed, but were included at City Arts to make it competitive in the Baltimore rental market, Rase said.

The tax credit rents for City Arts range from \$619 to \$656 for the one-bedroom units, and the rents are \$775 for the two-bedroom units. Eleven one-bedroom apartments are set aside for the nonelderly disabled who have project-based vouchers from Baltimore Housing to meet a city priority.

All of the units are reserved for occupancy by households under 60 percent of area median income (AMI) except for the 11 units for the non-elderly disabled, which are at 30 percent of AMI and below.

Project Financing

Permanent financing for City Arts includes \$9,312,495 in equity from Bank of America from an annual allocation of \$1,380,000 in 9 percent tax credits from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The 2009 tax credits were syndicated by Enterprise.

The project also received a low-interest loan of \$2,635,000 through the tax credit assistance program (TCAP). TCAP played a crucial role in filling a financing gap when the deal closed in late 2009, when tax credit prices were low, said Rase. Bank of America also provided a \$1.3 million first mortgage. In addition, a \$135,399 low-interest loan was provided from the Maryland energy program.

The land for City Arts was purchased at a below-market price from the city, which paid for environmental remediation at the site. The project is located in a qualified census tract, which provided a 30 percent boost in eligible basis.

The project has many green features, including R-24 insulation for the exterior walls, heat pumps with a high efficiency rating, and a white energy-reflecting roof that will reduce cooling costs. Monthly energy bills should average about \$45, according to an estimate from the contractor.

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'Shovel-ready' housing projects around state get stimulus funds

Most of the \$31.7 million is federal money to help build residences for seniors, families

By Edward Gunts | ed.gunts@baltsun.com

6:42 PM EDT, August 20, 2009

Maryland's housing department has authorized developers of 15 "shovel-ready" multifamily rental housing projects around the state to receive \$33.5 million funds that will enable them to create \$216.7 million worth of new or rehabbed "work force" housing for families and seniors -- 1,439 units in all.

Projects funded include the 69-unit, \$13.5 million City Arts apartments for artists, planned for the 1500 block of Greenmount Ave. in Baltimore, which received \$2.6 million; acquisition and rehabilitation of the 159-unit Admiral Oaks Apartments on Captains Circle in Annapolis, which received \$727,421; and the 90-unit Wayland Village apartments for seniors in the 3000 block of Garrison Blvd. in Baltimore, which received \$2 million.

The bulk of the money, \$31.7 million, is federal stimulus funds from the Tax Credit Assistance Program. The remainder, about \$1.8 million, is from assorted state rental housing funds.



TCAP provides funding to projects that have already received federal low-income housing tax credits through the housing department's competitive application process for rental construction but have stalled as a result of the recession.

TCAP awards are intended to jumpstart these stalled projects by filling funding gaps between the amount of private equity originally expected to be generated by the sale of low-income housing tax credits and the actual reduced amount generated due to changes in the market for tax credits.

According to state officials, projects were selected based on their readiness to close on all financing and begin construction. The money goes to the developments in the form of low-interest loans with flexible terms. According to federal regulations, all TCAP funds must be used by Feb. 16, 2012.

"Due to fluctuations in the market, many affordable rental housing projects funded by tax credits were forced to slow or, in some cases, stall their progress," said Raymond Skinner, secretary of the state's Department of Housing and Community Development. "By providing TCAP assistance to these shovel-ready developments, we can revive these projects, have a positive impact on the economy and put housing back to work in Maryland."

Maryland has been praised by the federal government for its "speedy, transparent and effective management of Recovery funds," said Gov. Martin O'Malley. "We will continue our skillful distribution of resources with the Tax Credit Assistance Program, increasing affordable housing opportunities and creating jobs for Marylanders."

Other projects supported by the latest state awards include:

Allegany County Cumberland Meadows, 64 units of housing for seniors, which received \$2.7 million; William Booth Towers, 114 units of housing for seniors, which received \$3 million

Anne Arundel County Glenview Gardens, 204 units of to-be-rehabbed housing, which received \$2 million; Hammarlee

House, 55 units of new housing for seniors, which received \$2.7 million; Park View at Severna Park, 103 units of new housing for seniors, which received \$2 million

Baltimore County The Greens at Liberty Road, 105 units of new housing for seniors, which received \$2 million

Cecil County Cedar Hill, 77 to-be-rehabbed units, which received \$2 million; North Creek Run, 53 units of new multi-family housing, which received \$3 million

Dorchester County Conifer Village at Cambridge II, 70 units of new housing for seniors, which received \$3 million

Garrett County Liberty Mews, 36 units of new multi-family housing, which received \$2.336,990 million

Harford County Perryman Station, 80 units of new housing for seniors, which received \$3 million

Howard County Sierra Woods, 160 units of to-be-rehabbed multi-family housing in Howard County, which received \$400,000.

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New housing to give artists a place to live, work

City Arts development planned for Station North



Charlie Duff of Jubilee Baltimore (left) talks with neighborhood artists Michelle Belfield (center) and John Kan on Oliver Street, where new housing for artists is planned. (Baltimore Sun photo by Amy Davis / June 9, 2009)

By Edward Gunts

June 21, 2009

Baltimore's [Station North](#) arts and entertainment district has new theaters, restaurants, bars and galleries.

Now it's about to get new housing, too - designed for the artists and performers who work in the area.

City Arts is the name of a \$15 million apartment and townhouse development that is expected to rise starting later this year on a city-owned parcel at 440 E. Oliver St., at Greenmount Avenue.

Consisting of 69 apartments for rent and eight townhouses for sale, City Arts will be the first all-new housing project in the 100-acre arts and entertainment district since [Mayor Sheila Dixon](#) unveiled a \$1 billion vision plan for the area last fall.

It involves one of the largest vacant parcels in the area and will be the first new housing of any kind to be constructed in Baltimore's Greenmount West neighborhood in decades.

That makes it a key component of the plan to revitalize the Station North area, close to where Baltimore's annual [Artscape](#) festival will be held July 17-19.

And unlike some locations where artists currently live, residents won't have to worry that rents will rise sharply as the years go by, because they're being regulated from the start to stay "affordable" as a condition of the project's financing.

"It's going to be specifically targeted to artists," said Charles Duff of Jubilee Baltimore, part of the development team. "That's its mission. It's going to be managed with artists in mind. It will have a residents' committee that will help run it. ... It's a starter community for the arts community."

Bounded roughly by Greenmount Avenue, 20th Street, Howard Street and the Amtrak corridor, Station North is a state-designated district that contains a variety of cafes, galleries and arts-related businesses, including the Charles and Everyman theaters, as well as historic Pennsylvania Station. Dixon in October unveiled a plan to make it more of a regional destination by expanding Penn Station and adding hundreds of residences, stores and offices, representing a potential investment of \$1 billion.

The arts district has housing for artists in converted loft buildings. But those structures weren't designed to contain residences, and there is no guarantee that they'll remain affordable for artists if they're ever sold for redevelopment.

In addition, a group called East-West Properties has rehabbed 13 rowhouses for artists in the 1600 block of Latrobe St., and they filled up quickly.

The idea behind City Arts was to supplement the district's entertainment venues and galleries with a large, permanent supply of affordable housing that will help keep artists in the area. The developers also wanted to create a project that was large enough to be an anchor for the arts district and a catalyst for more residential development nearby. "If Station North is to be an arts district, we need some artists living there," Duff said.

The project has the support of Station North Arts and Entertainment Inc., the nonprofit that promotes and supports artists and cultural organizations in the district.

"It will revitalize an area that is not very active right now," said David Bielenberg, executive director of the nonprofit. "It will encourage more artists to come into the area and give them a place to live and work."

"I think it's going to be great," said Kim Rutherford, a member of the team that developed the Latrobe Street row homes. The Greenmount West area "has been going through a revitalization in the last five years or so, and this is going to be a big improvement. We're very anxious to see it get started."

The 1.2-acre parcel, just west of Green Mount Cemetery, has been vacant since a city welfare office was demolished three decades ago. The city housing department several years ago sought proposals from groups interested in redeveloping the property and selected the City Arts project over two other proposals.

Besides Jubilee, which has built 600 "affordable" and market-rate residences in Baltimore, members of the development team include Homes for America, an Annapolis-based nonprofit housing corporation; TRF Development Partners-Baltimore, a nonprofit venture of the Reinvestment Fund of Philadelphia; Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development; and the Rouse Co. Foundation.

Homes for America specializes in creating affordable housing for people with low and moderate incomes and special needs. TRF Development Partners-Baltimore was created in 2006 to invest in residential projects that can help turn around distressed neighborhoods. Greenmount West is one of three Baltimore communities in which it is active, along with Oliver and Westport. All three organizations are working on the apartment portion; TRF Development Partners is building the townhouses. Southway Builders is the general contractor.

Duff and Polly Duke, senior vice president of Homes for America, said the residents stand to benefit from the project's proximity to the wide range of arts ventures that have begun to appear near the train station.

"It's the beginning of a vibrant new arts scene in Baltimore, the likes of which we haven't seen in many years," Duff said. "The Single Carrot Theatre, the Windup Space, a new theater in the Load of Fun [studios]. You have a large amount of property that's in the hands of people who want to use it to make the neighborhood an arts and entertainment district. ... They're people who have the means, motive and opportunity to make it happen."

Designed by Hord Coplan Macht of Baltimore and tentatively set to open by late 2010, the four-story apartment project will have 35 off-street parking spaces and a first-floor multipurpose space that can be used as a gallery and performance area. Monthly rents will range from \$619 to \$656 for 60 one-bedroom apartments and \$775 for nine two-bedroom apartments. The project's financing includes "low income" tax credits that both enable and require the developers to keep rents affordable.

Sherwin Mark, owner of Load of Fun at 120 W. North Ave., will head a committee to establish criteria for selecting residents for the rental portion. Duff said the goal will be to attract a wide range of artists, including painters, writers, actors and musicians.

The 2 1/2 -story houses will contain three bedrooms, 2 1/2 bathrooms and a range of "green" features. They will open

by early 2011. Prices are expected to range from \$165,000 to \$180,000. Because of fair-housing laws, sales can't be restricted to artists.

The development team worked with the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance to survey artists and find out what features they'd like the apartments to have. One response they got from many artists, Duff said, is that they'd like the project to look like a converted loft structure, with large windows to let in plenty of natural light. "They wanted it to look like an old industrial building," he said.

If townhouse buyers work for the Johns Hopkins system, they may qualify for Hopkins' "Live Near Your Work" program, which will give them \$17,500 toward their purchase.

Duke, of Homes for America, said the location will benefit artists because it's a relatively short distance both to downtown and to North Avenue, the main east-west spine of the arts district. Sean Closkey, president of TRF Development Partners, said another selling point is that City Arts will be near Penn Station and the trains linking Baltimore with New York, Washington and other destinations. "It is a wildly valuable asset."

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Artists in Residence

City Arts Apartments rise in Station North.

by **Brennen Jensen**



BRENNEN JENSEN

[click to enlarge](#)



photo by **Brennen Jensen**

"Artist housing." What does this phrase bring to mind? Perhaps a rickety, walk-up garret with north-facing windows but no running water. Maybe a gritty, brick-walled industrial loft with all the creature comforts of an abandoned warehouse.

Chances are you don't envision spacious new apartments with handsome kitchens in a modern building wired for high-speed Internet. City Arts Apartments, soon to be completed at 440 Oliver Street within the Station North Arts and Entertainment District, offers these amenities and more as Baltimore's first purpose-built housing development for artists. It takes advantage of a federal program that allows developers to receive

low-income tax credits while creating rental housing with a preference for artists.

"We shamelessly stole the idea from a group called Artspace in Minneapolis," says Charlie Duff, director of Jubilee Baltimore, which along with Homes for America and TRF Development Partners, represents the trio of nonprofit housing developers behind the project.

[click to enlarge](#)

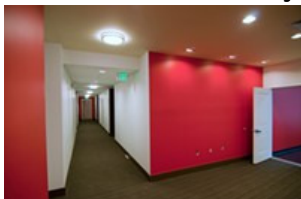


photo by **Brennen Jensen**

The Minneapolis group has developed numerous artists' housing projects using the "artist preference" wording within the federal low-income tax-credit housing financing program. In 2008, the IRS challenged the legality of these preferences, but it was overruled by congress. Duff sees this as a win for folks trying to expand their creative communities.

"Artists are good to have in your town," Duff says. "They keep you on your toes and look at things differently. They don't let you get stuck in a rut. They also make things and sell them, so they contribute making Baltimore a productive city."

As a designated low-income building, all tenants must meet income guidelines to be eligible for apartments, which rent from \$619 for a one bedroom to \$775 for a two-bedroom. Ten of the 69 units are reserved for folks on Baltimore's public housing waiting list and don't need to be artists. Artists are given preference to rent the remaining units, and potential tenants must have their work reviewed by a volunteer committee of evaluators in

order to, as per the apartment's website, "demonstrate their ability to provide consistent participation or a commitment to a creative pursuit." You needn't be a professional artist, just a dedicated one—be it a painter, writer, poet, actor, musician, dancer, or other creative type.

[click to enlarge](#)

photo by **Brennen Jensen**

So far the rental agents have received over 45 applications, including artists from Brooklyn, Atlanta, Delaware, and Soho. That's right—an artist might be leaving Soho to live in Baltimore, perhaps because they were priced out of the trendy Manhattan neighborhood. That shouldn't happen here. Legal requirements related to its financing mandate that the City Arts building remain a low-income rental building for 50 years.

"This is about building an arts district," Duff says. "Artists are not going to be priced out if the neighborhood gets better."

Touring the building, where construction is still underway and tenant move-in is still several weeks away, there's not much to make you think this is an arts building. There will be an on-site arts gallery and performance space. Some of the apartments feature "slop sinks" in the living area to help with clean-up after some messier arts endeavors. Otherwise, they are just nice, modern apartments. Duff thinks the units will appeal to artists from their mid-twenties up who want to live in the district but eschew the rougher, college-age-oriented spaces carved out of industrial buildings, such as in the nearby Copy Cat building.

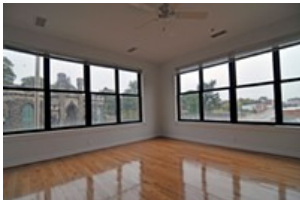
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photo by **Brennen Jensen**

City Arts does have another twist. It looks out on the ornate entrance to leafy Green Mount Cemetery, offering a much more bucolic view than you usually get in the city. Albeit, it's a woodsy vista featuring aged headstones and gothic statuary.

"You feel like you've died and have gone to heaven," Duff says.

This article first appeared in Urbanite's Home/Design e-zine. To have the latest scoop on Baltimore's architecture and design scene delivered to your in-box each week, [subscribe here](#).

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