Set within an Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) defined district, the architectural contemporary response relates to its surrounding neighborhood, while holding an urban edge along Irvington’s main corridor, Washington Street. The game-changing design move came in siting the building. The 50 Affordable Housing living units were split into two buildings, creating an urban courtyard between the structures as a nucleus to the development. This allows the site and buildings to become a campus. Through thoughtful sense of proportion and style, the buildings transition the campus to the surrounding residential context. Vehicular and pedestrian flow is crafted through the use of clear circulation, simple building footprints and visual connections throughout the site. The compact campus pushes parking to the rear, screening vehicles. The urban courtyard and the surrounding buildings become the anchor points designating the urban court as the foci of the campus.

The final structures and site, through their arrangement, create “true community” through architecture. Individual dwelling unit balconies were omitted to create community decks. The vegetated roof plaza and the urban court strengthen and stimulate tenant interaction and community. To further enhance this sense of place outside of the 50 units, a community room on street-level was designed to accommodate events that can spill out to an exterior patio through a 16-foot wide glass overhead door. The Irvington Development Organization’s main offices and leasing are housed adjacent to the entry lobby and the neighborhood community room for increased visibility.

Efficient building forms using contemporary materials such as larger brick modules, a cedar rain-screen system, fiber-cement panels and commercial glazing systems were integral to the design of the campus. Wide expanses of glass along with taller ceilings create an interior-exterior connection flooding the spaces with natural light, increasing the quality of life for its residents. The campus design incorporates sustainable practices such as a community garden, vegetated green roof, storm water collection cistern, photovoltaic array and a permeable paver urban courtyard. These practices, combined with Energy Star technology and cross ventilation, achieved a Silver Level certification through the National Green Building Standard (NGBS).

Although Affordable Housing projects do not often receive efficient technologies and higher end design, the Lofts were designed to be efficient, utilizing Structurally Insulated Panels (SIPs) for exterior walls and a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) heating and cooling system. By combining sustainable, high-end design, phased construction and brownfield redevelopment, a new standard for affordable community housing has been established. Irvington Lofts enhances quality of life and sense of place, positioning Irvington at the forefront of Indianapolis’ evolving urban development.
IRVINGTON LOFTS
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