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From: BUILDER October 2011 | Posted on: October 13, 2011
Houston

New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing

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New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing, Houston

Grand and Special Focus Awards, Adaptive reuse project; Public art

Turning a derelict public property into dignified housing for individuals transitioning out of homelessness is a community win-win. In the case of Brays Crossing, it was also an art.

When the city of Houston commissioned nonprofit developer New Hope Housing to transform a crumbling two-acre parcel into affordable housing, the challenges were sizable. The seven existing buildings contained an odd mix of mismatched units, only half of which were habitable. And the site was located next to a noisy freeway.

The new campus, designed by Glassman Shoemaker Maldonado Architects and built by Camden Builders, achieves the seemingly impossible. It's now home to 149 single-room-occupancy units for residents who make an average of \$12,000 per year and pay rents ranging from \$425 to \$485 per month. Low-rise buildings are separated by public gardens containing a barbecue area, a croquet court, a fountain, and quiet courtyards. But the project's sound mitigation strategy is the cleverest piece of all. Buffering the site from freeway noise is a public art display that runs the length of the property. It comprises four galvanized steel murals by Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza—crafted in the style of traditional Mexican papel picado (paper cut-out) banners—combined with colorful masonry walls. This vibrant display is complemented by clerestory stained glass mosaic windows, celebrating local Hispanic heritage and culture.

Grand and Special Focus Awards

Categories Adaptive reuse project; Public art

Entrant/Developer New Hope Housing, Houston

Builder Camden Builders, Houston

Architect/Land planner Glassman Shoemaker Maldonado Architects, Houston

Interior designer Mary McDaniel Interiors, Houston
