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Brattle Arms, Cambridge, Mass. Receives 2008 RHA Community of Excellence Award

November 24, 2009 - Spotlights

Brattle Arms is located in the heart of Harvard Square in Cambridge, one of America's premier market areas. The classic, eight-story property was purchased by Chestnut Hill Realty in 2006, and has been meticulously restored to provide both individual and corporate apartments featuring a distinctive "boutique hotel" style.

Brattle Arms was purchased by CHR from a family-owned trust that built and then managed the property for more than 50 years. The purchase meshed with CHR's longstanding business model: purchase aging, yet highly desirable properties in strong market areas, and add value by customized renovations and adding CHR's service-oriented property management. The building itself had great appeal with its oversized windows, interesting architectural details (including a vintage art deco sign) and unobstructed views of Cambridge and Boston from a stunning eighth floor penthouse.

Like boutique hotels, Brattle Arms is a relatively small, yet architecturally interesting property in a strong market area with easy access to downtown Boston. To take advantage of these strengths, CHR planned its restoration effort carefully. Some units were reconfigured to maximize square footage and create better flow within the residences. Corporate units were added to the mix because there is great demand for them in Cambridge by biotech and high-tech industries and by academic institutions. The result was 40 residential units, and one medical suite.

One interesting feature of every unit is a series of arches representing the "art deco" style, popular from the 1920s to the 1940s. These were created during the original building process and were preserved in the renovations. All of the residences received new kitchens and baths, featuring state of the art finishes and appliances. New windows with integrated HVAC units are a major upgrade to the original metal, single pane windows that they replaced, while meeting the historical standards of Cambridge. In every phase of the renovation, environmentally friendly products were used in keeping with CHR's Live Green program.

The property provides an in-house fitness facility, laundry facilities, a lending library and access to parking. Many residents do not have cars, choosing instead the convenience of the nearby subway or bus lines. For those who need a car occasionally, Zipcars are available in the area.

As with all CHR properties, Brattle Arms features CHR's professional management and 24-hour maintenance guarantee. Management staff members are part of an experienced, locally-based team that also has responsibility for CHR's other residential properties in Cambridge, Brighton, and

Brookline, which provide a total of 640 units.

For residents, Brattle Arms presents a unique residential opportunity in one of the most dynamic urban communities in America. It is also an example of how landmark properties can be restored to meet today's standards. The Rental Housing Association agreed with the concept when it recognized Brattle Arms with its 2008 Communities of Excellence Award for preservation appropriate for its market. CHR expects the property to be a leading Harvard Square residence far into the future.

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