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Castle Square Apartments achieves LEED for Homes Multifamily Platinum Certification

December 27, 2012 - Green Buildings

According to Castle Square Tenants Organization, Inc. (CSTO), a non-profit owned by the residents of Castle Square Apartments, in partnership with WinnDevelopment, the real estate development arm of WinnCompanies, Castle Square Apartments has been awarded LEED for Homes Multifamily Platinum Certification, the highest green building rating offered by the U.S. Green Building Council, after completing one of the nation's largest deep energy retrofits of an existing affordable housing community.

Located on Tremont St., in the city's South End and constructed in the 1960s, Castle Square Apartments is a 540,000 s/f mixed-use property comprised of 500 affordable apartment units and 20,000 s/f of retail space. LEED Platinum certification was awarded upon completion of the two-year renovation.

A deep energy retrofit is defined as a renovation with energy savings greater than 50%. The deep energy retrofit completed at Castle Square differs from standard energy efficiency renovations due to the insulation, which at Castle Square is located on the outside of the building. The new five-inch super insulated shell, combined with an insulated reflective roof, high efficiency windows and extensive air sealing, has increased the insulation value of the building by a factor of ten. Additional energy savings were achieved using small high efficiency cooling and heating equipment, LED and CFL lighting, Energy Star appliances and solar hot water. As a result, Castle Square Apartments is modeled to reach a 72% reduction in energy usage.

In addition to the Deep Energy Retrofit that focused on 192 apartments in the seven-story buildings, Winn and Castle Square Tenants Organization completed substantial improvements in every apartment, including energy measures, new ecologically sustainable kitchens and baths, flooring with recycled content and plant-based materials, low VOC paint and improved ventilation, recycling of construction materials and ecologically sensitive landscaping.

Existing buildings in the U.S. account for 40% of the nation's energy use and 38% of the carbon dioxide emissions. The renovation at Castle Square represents a historic milestone toward lowering the carbon footprint of existing buildings. Castle Square was selected as one of a handful of pilot projects in the state to receive financing from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

"Winn is very proud to have received such a significant recognition for the groundbreaking renovations we completed with Castle Square Tenants Organization," said Larry Curtis, president of WinnDev.

"The energy savings we are seeing are unprecedented and will not only benefit the residents at Castle Square, but also the City of Boston. We hope this project will serve as a model for multifamily housing upgrades across the country."

"The renovation of the Castle Square Apartments is significant not only for its residents, but for this entire community," mayor Thomas Menino said. "It has created jobs for local workers, preserved 500 units of affordable housing for current and future working families of Boston, and its green design contributes to the overall health of our City. I thank the residents, HUD and DOER for their collaboration and commitment to preserving Castle Square as a welcoming home for all who live here now and in the future."

The property consists of four mid-rise buildings and 19 town house buildings containing one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments.

The renovation also consisted of the construction of a green community center that Castle Square Tenants Organization will use to expand its academic partnerships and program offerings to benefit a greater number of Castle Square residents. This comprehensive set of programs, which focuses on youth and adult education, includes an Early Education Childcare (EEC) licensed after school and middle school program, Environmental Science technology, youth leadership and entrepreneurship. The new community center will also provide the Organization with the space needed to start additional programs on job readiness and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and give more residents access to the technology learning center, the computer repair clinic, senior programs, multimedia production, and the teen center.

"These renovations and energy savings are going to immensely improve the Castle Square community," said Deborah Backus, executive director of Castle Square Tenants Organization. "We are very excited that our residents will now be enjoying a better quality of living and the new community center that will allow CSTO to expand its program offerings." www.cstoboston.org

"The Deep Energy Retrofit renovation has transformed Castle Square Apartments from an outdated 1965 red brick structure to a modern contemporary design that blends in with the increasingly affluent neighborhood that surrounds our community," said Ann Moy, president of Castle Square Tenants Organization.

The renovations to Castle Square were financed through both public and private partnerships with MassHousing Financing Agency, HUD, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Bank of America, NSTAR, National Grid, as well as The Kresge Foundation and Enterprise Foundation who provided grants for the project.

The Deep Energy Retrofit of Castle Square created 655 construction jobs, and allowed residents to remain in their apartments with minimal disruption.

The architect and general contractor for this project were Elton + Hampton Architects and CWC Builders, Inc., and Pinck & Co. served as the construction project manager. In addition, Biome Studio and Building Science Corporation acted as environmental consultants.

In May, WinnDevelopment and Castle Square Tenants Organization was presented with the "Green Residential Award" and named "Climate Action Leader" by Mayor Menino for the Castle Square project. In addition, the Rental Housing Association (RHA), the Massachusetts affiliate of the National Apartment Association (NAA), honored Castle Square with the Best Affordable Housing award at the Multifamily Conference and Expo. on September 28. The National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) also selected Castle Square as the winner of the 2012 Vanguard Award for "Major Rehabilitation of an Existing Rental Housing Community."