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NEI honored with Excellence in Construction Award

November 17, 2023 - Construction Design & Engineering



Norwood, MA NEI General Contracting (NEI) was honored with a chapter Excellence in Construction Award (EICA) from ABC MA at its annual gala on November 2nd at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood, Mass. The EICA program is the industry's leading competition that honors both general and specialty contractors for world-class, safe, and innovative construction projects.

NEI was recognized for its work on the occupied renovation of a 490,000 s/f affordable housing complex for Homeowners Rehab, Inc. (HRI). Located at 808-812 Memorial Dr. in Cambridge, Mass., the Rivermark complex contains 88 apartments in a 10-story building, 212 apartments in a 19-story building, 38,000 s/f of commercial space, and five levels of parking. Of the 300 units, 211 will be for low-income residents and administered by the Cambridge Housing Authority. The remaining 89 apartments will be rented at market rates. Designed by Bruner/Cott, work began in 2020 and was completed in December 2022.

“This outstanding achievement is a testament to NEI’s capabilities and a notable achievement for the merit shop construction industry,” said Greg Beeman, president of ABC MA.

“In drawing attention to excellence in construction, you are helping to raise overall standards.”

To achieve a sleek, modern look while improving energy performance and boosting air filtration to improve indoor air quality to increase residents’ comfort, more than 320,000 SF of the towers’ ribbed face concrete façades were overclad with a custom, unitized 12-inch-thick panel wall system. Installation of the new, high-performance façade and window systems refreshed the appearance of the building, supported mechanical system upgrades, and significantly reduced residents’ cost of living.

The project scope also reworked the landscape and community courtyard to improve lighting, circulation, and accessibility. Indoors, common spaces such as the community room, activity room, and computer lab were reconfigured to improve functionality. Lobbies, elevators, and corridors were updated with modern and vibrant finishes, flooring, lighting, and signage, in addition to select interior unit renovations. Amenities include an on-site daycare; retail space; designated outdoor areas including a playground; community spaces with a programmed activity room and computer lab, a large community room with kitchen; communal laundry rooms; fitness center; parking (garage); in-unit air conditioning and heat controls.

From a construction and management point of view, the combination of occupied rehab and the start of construction at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic was an ongoing challenge for the two and half years of construction. Constant daily communication between all members of the team was required to address resident needs while maintaining the construction schedule and staying on budget as residents were temporarily relocated while work occurred in their apartment. Careful planning with construction workers, the relocation team, movers, cleaners, and property management help to avoid large disturbances to tenant life by keeping everyone safe through careful PPE policies and relocation plans.

The project pursued and received an Enterprise Green Communities Certification, a program aimed at transforming the quality of affordable housing in America, meeting criteria related to integrated design, site improvement, resource conservation, operational energy considerations, and more.

Project team members on the Rivermark project include:

Owner: Homeowners Rehab, Inc. (HRI)
General Contractor: NEI General Contracting
Architect: Bruner/Cott
MEP Engineer: Peterson Engineering
Civil Engineer: Nitsch Engineering
Cladding, Glazing, Storefronts: Sunrise Erectors Inc

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