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Maine Real Estate & Development Association awards top seven notable projects of 2023

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MEREDA Celebrates Real Estate Development in Maine



Photo courtesy of CHOM



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2023 Notable Project Recipients:

Above: Phoenix Flats, Community Housing of Maine (Portland), University of Southern Maine Portland Commons Residence Hall and McGoldrick Center for Career & Student Success (Portland), Johnson Hall Opera House, Johnson Hall Redevelopment, LLC (Gardiner) **Left:** Homeless Services Center, Developers Collaborative (Portland), **Below:** Maine Savings Amphitheater, Waterfront Concerts, LLC (Bangor), The Armature at Hanover Works, Reveler Development (Portland), Northeastland Hotel, Haley Ward, Inc. (Presque Isle)



Photo courtesy of John Benford



Photo courtesy of Ben Getchell



Photo courtesy of Reveler Development - Photo by Hitched Willie



Photo courtesy of Haley Ward, Inc..

Portland, ME The Maine Real Estate & Development Association (MEREDA) honored projects from Portland to Bangor to Presque Isle, with each receiving special recognition at MEREDA's 2024 Spring Conference on May 15th.

Each year, MEREDA recognizes some of the state's most "noteworthy and significant" real estate projects, completed in the previous year. The exemplary projects from across the state, completed in 2023, not only embody MEREDA's belief in responsible real estate development, but also exemplify best practices in the industry, contributing to Maine's economic growth by significant investment of resources and job creation statewide.

Each of the seven projects was selected in part based upon criteria including: noteworthy and

significant project completed* in 2023 (*Building Occupancy Permit issued by 12.31.23), environmental sustainability, economic impact, energy efficiency, social impact, uniqueness, difficulty of development and job creation.

The recipients of MEREDA's top seven most notable projects of 2023 include:

- University of Southern Maine Portland Commons Residence Hall and McGoldrick Center for Career & Student Success in Portland. These two facilities represent a massive transformation of USM's Portland campus. The first-ever Portland residence hall will provide affordable housing for students in a market where inventory is low and expensive. The new student center incorporates cross-laminated timber columns to create a signature visual expression across the front facade. These new campus facilities represent the pinnacle of sustainability and embrace renewable low-carbon building technologies. Portland Commons is the second largest Passive House residence hall in the United States and is projected to use 50% less energy than a standard modern building. The McGoldrick Center, with its large-scale 33.3-kW rooftop photovoltaic array and passive solar heating, is pursuing LEED Gold certification. The construction project is the largest in the school's history.
- Waterfront Concerts, LLC of Old Town enlisted Ervin Architecture and completed their long-standing vision of developing a best-in-class amphitheater, with the Maine Savings Amphitheater being the largest and most modern music venue north of Boston. Bangor is now a premier concert destination for world class talent and amazing community events. Additions include ten corporate suites, five premium clubs, several ADA improvements, improved and expanded concessions, terraced Hussey Fusion seating with wider seats and aisles, two hundred and fifty-two new bathrooms, and a dedicated video screens and audio system for the lawn. The team used Maine-made products, contractors, and environmentally sustainable materials wherever they could to maximize the impact locally and to minimize its impact on the community and environment.
- Phoenix Flats in Portland is the first building in Maine to be constructed with the use of the newly created State Low Income Housing Tax Credit. The project is the result of a unique partnership between the City of Portland, MaineHousing, Portland Housing Authority, WNC, Bangor Savings Bank, and Community Housing of Maine, Inc. (CHOM), and was made possible by a long-term land lease from the City, and an additional land donation from Donald Sussman. Designed by CWS Architects, Thornton-Tomasetti, Bennet Engineering, Terradyn Consultants, and built by AlliedCook Construction, Phoenix Flats is Passive House Certified, and its design is the embodiment of all CHOM has learned about good design, energy efficiency, and thermal comfort. This development combines both affordable residential apartments and first-class commercial space into one building in downtown Portland. Beyond adding critical affordable housing, it is a blended Housing First development, discreetly housing people who are chronically homeless. What was once a city owned parking lot is now a beautiful building contributing to the social and economic goals of the City of Portland and the State of Maine.
- The City of Portland's Homeless Services Center in Portland, also known as the "HSC" is Maine's largest homeless shelter and is unparalleled in its provision of dignified living spaces and on-site

wraparound support services. The HSC was thoughtfully designed and constructed specifically to serve the unhoused based on input from those experiencing homelessness. It includes 208 beds between separate men's and women's dormitories, a commercial kitchen and dining area, bathrooms with private showers, offices for service providers, an on-site health clinic run by Greater Portland Health, and an outdoor recreation area with garden beds. A result of many years of visioning and planning, the City of Portland selected Developers Collaborative to develop the shelter and lease it back to the City. Winton Scott Architects designed the building and Cianbro served as construction manager. The HSC utilized a pre-engineered Murox building system, concrete floors, and minimal finishes. The result is a LEED Gold-certified building that is durable, functional, comfortable, and humane. HSC operations are free of fossil fuels, powered instead by a solar array installed on the building's roof. Heating, cooling, and hot water are entirely electric, and the building features a highly efficient variable refrigerant flow system.

- The Northeastland Hotel project in Presque Isle is noteworthy for its groundbreaking approach to community development, where a nonprofit partnered with the private sector to drive economic growth and create new opportunities in Presque Isle. Ignite PI reimaged the Northeastland Hotel as a hub for innovation and economic growth. Haley Ward, served as the Lead Designer and Architect of Record, and played a pivotal role in this endeavor, collaborating with Bowerbird Design Collective as the Interior Designer and Nickerson & O'Day, Inc. as the Construction Manager. The completion of Phase I in March 2023 marked a significant milestone for the renovation of over 8,900 square feet of space within the hotel. The repurposed Northeastland Hotel houses a coworking Innovation Center and revitalized common areas, including the restaurant, lobby, and staff rooms. This multifaceted approach not only modernizes the hotel but also transforms it into a vibrant space that fosters collaboration, entrepreneurship, and community engagement. The project highlights how a collaborative, forward-thinking approach can transform a community and its historical landmarks.

- Johnson Hall Redevelopment, LLC, redeveloped Maine's oldest Opera Theater. Johnson Hall Opera House in Gardiner, the three-story brick Italianate building is a significant feature of Gardiner's Historic District with a fascinating history spanning over 150 years. The building received both interior and exterior renovations to all three floors with an installation of a new balcony. It was constructed in conformance with historic standards as set forth by the National Park Service, Maine Historical Preservation Commission standards and Gardiner Historical Society requirements. Today the building features a 400-seat theater with state-of-the-art sound, lighting and projection equipment; a gracious lobby and concession area; and a green room for performers on the second floor; an expanded foyer and full-service box office on the ground floor; a renovated 100-seat theater on the lower level; and ADA compliant access throughout all floors with ramps, an elevator and a stage lift. During pre-construction and construction, over 37 consultants and businesses combined were engaged in the project. Johnson Hall Opera House is now an anchor to downtown hospitality businesses and an engine of economic opportunity. It will promote, create, and inspire artistic excellence through the presentation of world class entertainment and professional performing arts education to the Kennebec Valley.

- Reveler Development's The Armature at Hanover Works in Portland is Portland's first and only lifestyle apartment complex. The mixed-use property opened for occupancy in November 2023 and

is located in Portland's rapidly emerging West Bayside neighborhood, featuring 171 residential units, 10% of which is workforce housing, with integrated parking and 6,400 SF of commercial space. The Armature provides much-needed housing while also transforming the building's ground floor into a retail and dining hub within West Bayside. Once a mechanical garage and surface parking lot for Portland's fleet of public works vehicles, the industrial history of the site inspired The Armature's name and branding. A ground-up construction project, The Armature required an intensive construction timeline and was made possible by a collaborative effort with its project partners, including Penobscot General Contractors, Acorn Engineering, and Reveler's in-house construction team. The space was designed by Boston-based architecture firm Cube3. On the ground floor, The Armature's four commercial spaces will connect with local businesses along 82 Hanover St., forming Hanover Works and fostering an indoor-outdoor neighborhood hub.

MEREDA congratulates its 2023 notable project award recipients and thanks its membership for their continued commitment to responsible development in Maine.

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