

Category: Housing Development

Project: Ghost Ranch Lodge Apartments

Project Location: 801 W. Miracle Mile, Tucson, AZ 85705

Current Status: completed, fully occupied, and stabilized

Cost: \$22,460,696

Description: The history of Ghost Ranch Lodge Apartments and its rehabilitation is complex and extensive. Originally designed by renowned Swiss Architect Josias Joesler in 1941, Ghost Ranch Lodge holds a unique place in the history of Arizona. The skull logo appearing on the iconic signage was designed by renowned American artist Georgia O'Keefe. The property consists of 7.3 gross acres of land and contains twenty historic buildings, built between 1941 and 1953. The property also contains the famous Desert Cactus Garden, which is the residence of the officially recognized "Great Tree of Arizona," the largest Boojum Tree in the state of Arizona. Having proudly served the community for well over half a century, Ghost Ranch Lodge had sadly deteriorated into a vacant complex in a state of serious dilapidation. The present affordable housing community began proudly accommodating low-income senior and physically disabled persons in July 2010 and was fully occupied by March of 2011 upon completion of Phase II.

Prior owners of Ghost Ranch Lodge had applied for, and received, a reservation of low income housing tax credits on two previous occasions. However, presumably as a result of the complexity of the property, the historical nature of the buildings and garden area, and other market conditions, neither prior effort succeeded as planned. On July 12, 2007, Ghost Ranch Lodge was purchased at auction by an affiliate of Atlantic Development and Investments, Inc., with the intent to bring all of its experience, resources and efforts to this troubled property. Since that time, we have worked diligently with City, County and other housing officials, City building and development officials, City and State historic preservation officers, neighborhood and community revitalization organizations, non-profit special needs service providers, architects, engineers, contractors, non-profit community support organizations, lenders, tax credit syndicators and investors and other professionals with the

Community Needs Addressed: Ghost Ranch Lodge satisfies the housing needs of low-income seniors and physically disabled persons in the Tucson area through the conversion of studio motor court apartments into one-level one-bedroom apartments, which are uniquely suited to the needs of the elderly. 100% of the 112 units are rent restricted units for persons whose income is 60% or less of the AMI. This met a strong demand for this type of housing in the area; in fact, a market demand study had noted that Ghost Ranch Lodge filled "the biggest need in the community, that is, for affordable senior housing units." The rehabilitation of Ghost Ranch Lodge also contributed towards the revitalization of the area. The project is located within a Federal Empowerment Zone, a QCT and the Miracle Mile Oracle Area Revitalization Project Boundaries, which encourages a variety of housing options sensitive to the area's historic character and overall improvement of the built environment, in conformance with policies found within the City of Tucson General Plan.

Benefits and Outcome: The success of the historic preservation of Ghost Ranch Lodge as affordable housing has had on the community is best expressed through the words of Jason Brown, the Vice Chair of the Citizens Steering Committee (CSC) for the Oracle Area Revitalization Plan, who praised the project for providing not only "much needed low-income senior housing" but also for acting as "a catalyst for future area improvements". The rehabilitation of this historic site not only preserved an important piece of American architectural history, but also brought the community together as participants in the redesign process. Ghost Ranch Lodge has won numerous local and national awards, including but not limited to the 2011 HUD Secretary's Historic Preservation Award, the 2011 J. Timothy Anderson Award for Excellent in Historic Rehab, the 2012 Arizona Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Award, and the 2013 National Affordable Housing Management Association's Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation. In short, the rehabilitation of

Ghost Ranch Lodge by Atlantic Development has garnered national attention to the superb affordable housing development work being carried out in AZ through the support of ADOH.

Project Collaborators: Atlantic worked diligently with City, County and other housing officials, City building and development officials, City and State historic preservation officers, neighborhood and community revitalization organizations, non-profit special needs service providers including the Greater Phoenix Urban League, architects, engineers, contractors, non-profit community support organizations, lenders, tax credit syndicators and investors and other professionals with the single purpose of bringing about the revitalization of the Ghost Ranch Lodge as much needed affordable housing for seniors and physically disabled persons. Celtic Property Management, LLC takes extra efforts to ensure ease and quality of life for the residents, including offering numerous programs and services designed to make living at Ghost Ranch Lodge as enjoyable as possible. Some of these services include: monthly functions, monthly book mobile, insurance and healthcare seminars, and arts & crafts in the clubhouse.

The City of Tucson and Pima County supported the rehabilitation of Ghost Ranch Lodge and committed \$2,357,000 in HOME and CDBG funds. Pima County supported the same with a \$1,100,000 GO Bond. Ghost Ranch lodge also secured \$700,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank; \$2,635,429 in Arizona Department of Housing TCAP funds; \$25,000 in Solar Tax Credits; \$1,301,545 in Historic tax credits. Additionally, we had a financing commitment for the acquisition and construction of the project from National Mortgage Investors, LLC., and an equity commitment of \$12,929,219 from Credit Capital Corporation, LLC., and a developer loan of \$274,477.

What Makes Your Project Unique?: One of the most challenging aspects of the project involved the severely dilapidated state of the property and buildings. In the initial stages of construction, we were very concerned with maintaining the integrity of the original structure. Extreme care was taken to preserve the historic characteristics of the Joesler-designed courtyard and buildings. Roof tiles were painstakingly removed and replaced, tile by tile, in order to repair the roof structure. Despite the seriously outdated condition of the fixtures and structures, we were able to put them back into use and code compliance. The quality of our work can be seen through the extensive preservation and utilization of a majority of the existing materials and structures from the original 1941 Joesler designs.

We also have to mention, that the rehabilitation of Ghost Ranch Lodge emphasized sustainable design elements, contributing towards a more sustainable environment through the use of: (1) low VOC materials to maintain excellent indoor air quality, (2) low water usage plumbing fixtures, (3) the use of Spray Foam and Structural Insulated Plans for 100% of the new construction (which exceeds required values for its climate zone), (4) a Solar PV System to offset 100% of the electrical load for the common areas, (5) high efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, and (6) energy-efficient windows.

Ghost Ranch Lodge has always held a special place in Tucson's history as it was one of the first motels in the US to utilize the motor court concept. It now stands as an example to others of how a historic property of this type can be successfully adapted to modern use, including compliance with current building codes and regulations and meeting the need for affordable senior housing in the community.

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