

New Genesis Apartments

Los Angeles, California

PROJECT DATA

LOCATION

456 SOUTH MAIN STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

PROJECT STATUS
OPENED IN 2012

PROJECT TYPE
MIXED-USE, AFFORDABLE
MULTIFAMILY RENTAL

SITE SIZE
0.39 ACRES (0.16 ha)

PROJECT SIZE
106 HOUSING UNITS; 2,400
SQUARE FEET (223 sq m) OF
GROUND-FLOOR RETAIL

PROJECT COST
\$36.6 MILLION

DEVELOPMENT TEAM
SKID ROW HOUSING TRUST

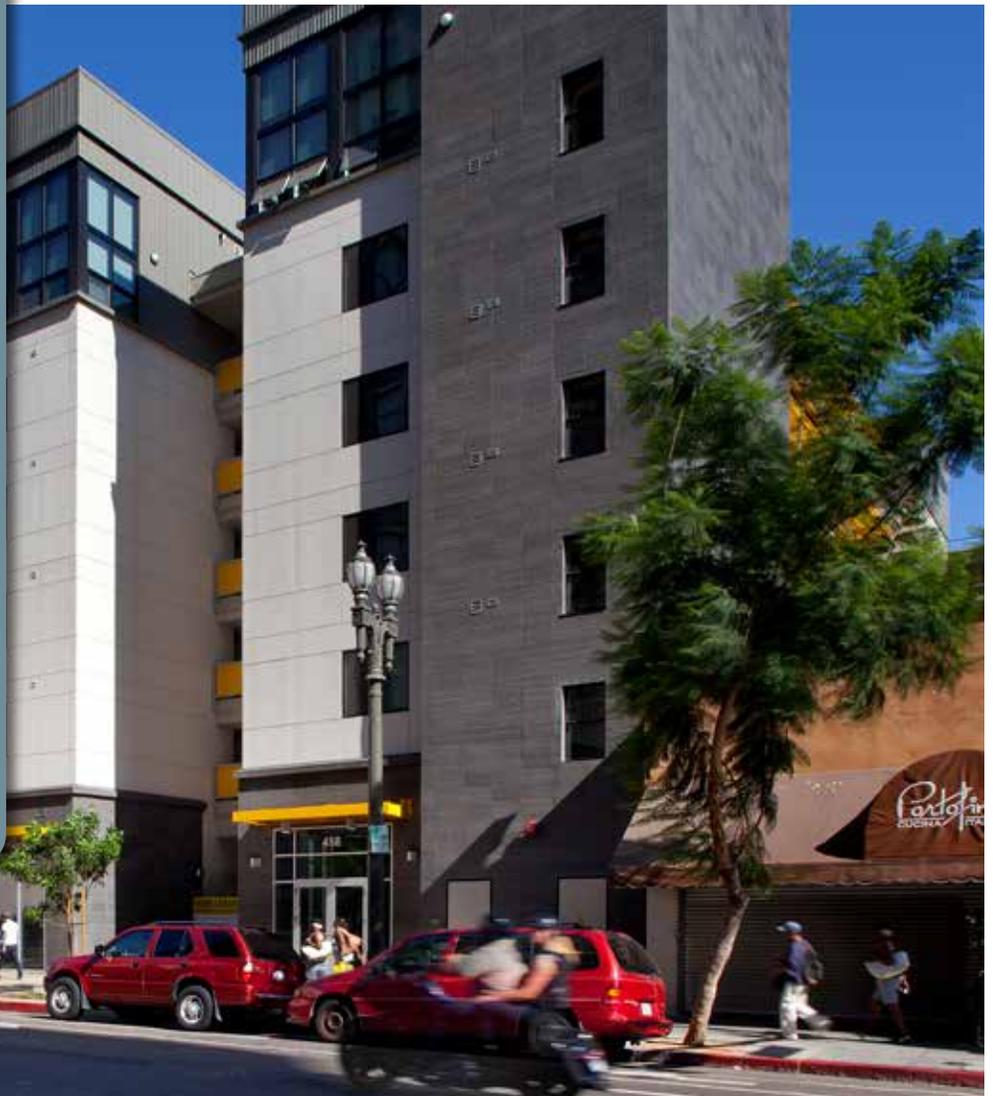
DESIGN TEAM
KILLEFER FLAMMANG
ARCHITECTS

FINANCING
CONSTRUCTION/PERMANENT
LOAN, PUBLICLY BACKED LOANS,
BONDS, LOW INCOME HOUSING
TAX CREDIT EQUITY

MENTAL HEALTH FEATURES
SUBSTANCE-ABUSE RECOVERY
CENTER WITH MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES, ART WORKSHOPS,
COMMUNAL INTERIOR AND
EXTERIOR SPACES, NATURAL
LIGHTING

PHYSICAL HEALTH FEATURES
MEDICAL CLINIC FOR PRIMARY
CARE, BICYCLE PARKING AND
PROGRAMMING, NONTOXIC
BUILDING MATERIALS,
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
FEATURES

NEW GENESIS APARTMENTS is a 106-unit, mixed-income, mixed-use housing redevelopment project that includes local retailers, affordable artists' lofts, and supportive housing services. The project is located between downtown Los Angeles's burgeoning historic core and the city's Skid Row neighborhood, a 50-block area that is home to more than 4,600 people who lack permanent stable housing.



New Genesis Apartments includes ground-floor retail space and 106 affordable residential units for those who otherwise may not have been able to stay in a rapidly developing section of downtown Los Angeles. (Photo ©2012 by Killefer Flammang Architects)

Context for Development

The Skid Row Housing Trust led the development of New Genesis to provide homes for a mix of previously homeless residents and low-income individuals who otherwise may not have been able to stay in the area, which is experiencing significant development and displacement pressures.

A series of stakeholder open houses led to the creation of a project with a mix of services and amenities designed to promote resident and neighborhood well-being. “We developed a variety of housing options for a diverse array of individuals using features that benefit all communities, including on-site health services, green space, and access to nearby transportation,” says Mike Alvidrez, chief executive officer of the Skid Row Housing Trust.

The project transformed the former Genesis Hotel, a two-story, 30-unit single-room-occupancy property built in the 1920s, into a development where 75 percent of the apartments house people with a history of homelessness or chronic mental illness, and the remaining units provide affordable housing, including designated artists’ lofts.

Each applicant for supportive housing undergoes a background check and participates in an interview with building staff after his or her application has been processed. Supportive housing units are subsidized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Housing Choice Voucher Program, with residents paying no more than 30 percent of their monthly income in rent. Applicants for the remaining units, which are priced to be affordable but not subsidized by outside sources, must meet specific income-level requirements.

Health-Focused Features

Features at New Genesis Apartments that promote the health of residents and the broader community include:

- * **Communal spaces.** A plant-filled atrium, courtyard, shared kitchen, community room, outdoor lounges, central outdoor staircase, and weather-protected balconies give residents spaces to safely spend time with others.
- * **Health clinic.** Exodus Recovery, a clinic offering mental health and substance-abuse treatment services, is adjacent to a courtyard filled with trees and natural light. Los Angeles Christian

Health Centers also provides on-site medical care on a part-time basis.

- * **Bicycle-friendly retail.** Peddler’s Creamery, an organic ice cream shop where each batch of ice cream is churned by bicycle, includes a corral for bike parking and offers workshops on bicycle maintenance and repair for residents and the public.
- * **Focus on creative placemaking.** Affordable artists’ lofts are within walking distance of the largest concentration of museums, art galleries, and theaters in Los Angeles. Weekly art and meditation workshops and support group meetings are held in the building’s communal spaces.
- * **Stormwater management features.** Ninety-eight percent of stormwater is naturally managed on site through use of drought-tolerant plants, high-efficiency sprinklers and water fixtures, and a dry well (a below-ground structure that disposes of surface runoff).
- * **Green building features.** Rooftop solar arrays, nontoxic building materials, and a distinctive energy-recovery ventilation system provide the building with healthy and efficient electricity, heating, cooling, and indoor air filtration.

Health Outcomes

Nearly all decisions about design and programming at New Genesis have been informed by a focus on creating safe and healthy spaces for those who have previously lacked housing. “We meet residents where they are with practices we know can achieve dramatic behavioral improvements,” notes Dana Trujillo, chief investment and finance officer at the Skid Row Housing Trust.

There is evidence that the project has already produced positive health outcomes. A 2016 study by Exodus Recovery that tracked 83 New Genesis residents over a four-year span showed that emergency-room visits and hospitalization rates decreased significantly, and that incarcerations were eliminated entirely.

By creating housing for residents with a mix of incomes and adding attractive ground-floor retail space, New Genesis offers a model for development that addresses housing access and affordability while also contributing to the ongoing economic revitalization of a rapidly developing section of Los Angeles.