

Championing Smart Growth Yields Affordable Housing Award

Springfield, Mass. – Smart growth means many things – among them reuse of existing buildings, energy efficiency, preservation of open space and affordable housing. In January 2007, **Dietz & Company Architects** received recognition on all of these fronts at the 1st Annual Pioneer Valley Smart Growth Awards. Held at Holyoke Community College’s Kittredge Center, the awards event was a collaboration of the Valley Development Council, the Home Builders Association of Western Massachusetts, the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Marc Sternick, AIA, LEED AP* and Vice President of Dietz & Company Architects, accepted the Affordable Housing Award for the firm’s innovative role in creating Holyoke’s Churchill Neighborhood. Project partners included the Holyoke Housing Authority and The Community Builders.

The event also recognized the firm’s collaboration with the City of Northampton and The Community Builders for its work on the Village at Hospital Hill, which received a Smart Growth Award for planned mix use. Dietz & Company Architects also accepted a Certificate of Merit in the Traditional Neighborhood Development category for its Ice Pond Drive housing development.

Churchill Neighborhood

In this award-winning housing design, most of the 110 rental and home-owner units in the Churchill neighborhood are for those on limited incomes or are considered affordable. Beyond affordability, there are many other factors which make this development synonymous with Smart Growth. Sternick comments, “What makes this development “smart” is that the new housing reuses a previously developed



housing site and revitalizes the area by knitting the new neighborhood into the old. Also, the housing is centrally located to stores, services and public transportation.”

Sternick adds, “Another “smart” feature is that these units were designed with energy efficiency in mind. All 50 of the rental units are extremely energy efficient. They surpassed EnergyStar® certification requirements and have been designed using highly durable, low-maintenance materials.” Additionally, the housing at Churchill Neighborhood is densely sited to maximize green, open space and includes a central park that all residents can use.

Village at Hospital Hill

Dietz & Company Architects is the designer for the affordable housing component of this planned mixed-use community, which is the site of the former Northampton State Hospital. The development will consist of a combination of renovated buildings and newly constructed townhouses, apartment buildings, and single family homes for a total of at least 207 units.

Approximately half of these units will be affordable to those on limited incomes. The development is being constructed on the site where an entire campus of abandoned buildings has stood for years. The site is within walking and biking distance to Northampton stores, services and public transportation.

Housing is tightly clustered to allow for larger areas of green space to be set aside for public use. The first 33 renovated

apartment units, which occupy two renovated buildings, are already fully occupied. EnergyStar® rated these energy efficient units a “five-star plus”.

Ice Pond Drive

Ice Pond Drive is a development of 28 home lots, 6 of which are designated to be affordable. Two of the units have barrier-free one bedroom apartments attached. All homes on this site were designed to blend with styles typical to the area and have exceeded EnergyStar® specifications. This development is an earlier part of the larger Village at Hospital Hill project.

Dietz & Company Architects

Dietz & Company Architects, Inc., one of the largest full-service firms in Western Massachusetts, is a woman-owned business that opened its doors in 1985. Areas of practice include large-scale housing, educational and healthcare institutions and commercial projects.

Since its inception, the firm has been designing energy efficient housing projects throughout Massachusetts. Dietz & Company Architects is committed to Smart Growth housing, which needs fewer resources to build and maintain than conventional housing. At the same time, the firm focuses on building affordability and better housing for all.

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