

Celebrating the Beauty of Community
History; Creating A Unique
Housing Opportunity

New York State Homes and Community Renewal
Rental Housing: Preservation and Rehabilitation

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The Larkin District of the City of Buffalo where the AP Lofts building is located is a mixed-use neighborhood that has experienced considerable private investment, including commercial and residential development. Rapid expansion in the area has sparked concerns on the local and State government levels about the lack of housing, especially affordable housing, the one area that has yet to catch up to the recent capital infusion.

Further, data shows that more than half of the renters in Buffalo are cost burdened and, as with many on a limited budget, have few affordable alternatives for safe and decent housing. One measure of Buffalo's demand for affordable housing is that the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority waitlist shows an estimated waiting period of more than 24 months for an apartment. At the same time, the City of Buffalo, in their 20-year comprehensive plan, "Queen City in the 21st Century," has prioritized community revitalization through the redevelopment of vacant buildings.



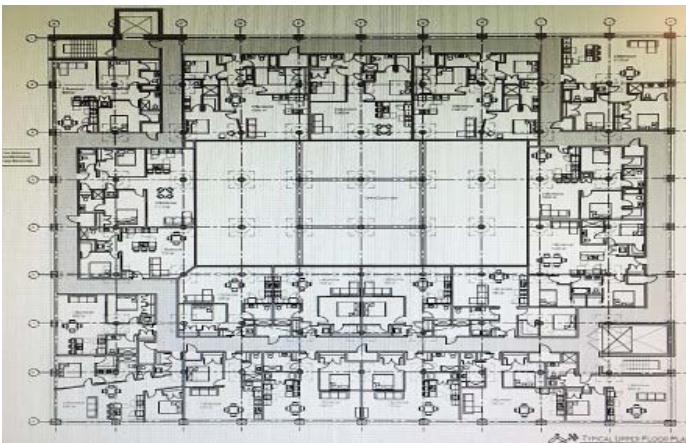
reinforced concrete floors supported by redwood-sized concrete columns did not lend themselves to easy or graceful conversion.

Yet, as part of the State's unprecedented \$20 billion, five-year Housing Plan to build or preserve more than 100,000 affordable homes and 6,000 with supportive services, the need to do something with this long-vacant, blighted site amid a revitalizing middle-income neighborhood made the bold design concept imaginative, exciting and

And these concerns led to action. AP Lofts, at 545 Swan Street in Buffalo, was a perfect, if challenging, candidate for transformation and proves that adaptive reuse need not be limited to similar "boxes" such as a school or other building that is already configured for an easy transition from one use to another. AP Lofts broke the mold; this was a massive warehouse with neither a central core nor useable sources of natural light and air. And because it was built to support tons of goods and the machinery needed to convey it, the structural mass of foot-thick



– best of all – feasible and fundable.



The bulk of the work was also the riskiest and most creative: cutting a huge hole in the center of the building to create a core to create a light and ventilation well from roof to ground. Not only did this make a ground-floor interior courtyard/community space possible, by providing a source of natural light and air to the interior, it doubled the number of apartments that could be created. The building's former use prompted more delicate touches; including imaginative interior

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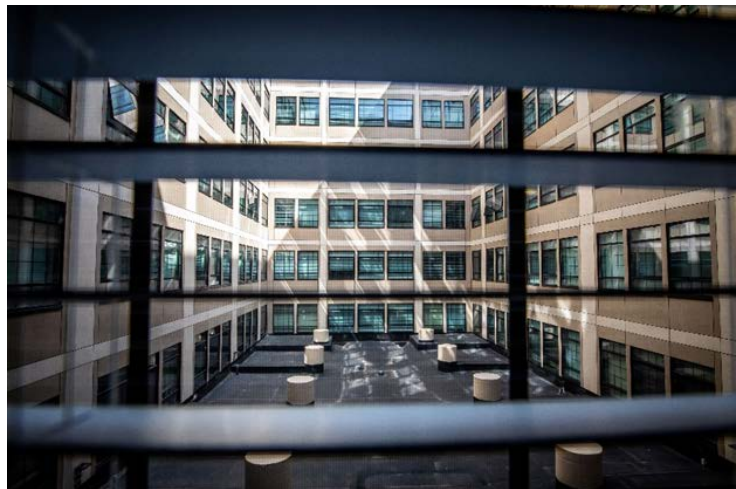
industrial architecture design that incorporated modern residential components and maintained many of the original structural and functional elements.

Thanks to \$40 million of blended funding, including \$24.5 million from the HFA, the former 118-year-old Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Warehouse is now 147 one- or two-bedroom units of mixed-income workforce housing with amenities including on-site parking (some of it indoor below grade), a business center, game room, fitness room, wellness studio and an outdoor patio. Each unit has its own laundry equipment, dishwasher, microwave, and other appliances. In accordance with the Agency's green building guidelines, all lighting fixtures and appliances have the Energy Star rating; there is motion sensor activated lighting, and low flow plumbing fixtures throughout. In addition, all interior partitions, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, roofing, elevators, finishes are completely new. Windows, like those originally used, were installed throughout and through the elimination of impervious surfaces, green space and a large exterior patio have been added.



The space once used as the train and truck loading dock is now home to a micro-brewery and pub.

One hundred eighteen of the apartments were set aside for households with income at or below 60 percent of the AMI for the Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY HUD Metro FMR Area, adjusted for family size. Twenty-eight units were available for households with incomes at or below 130 percent of AMI. Since 2011, HCR has invested more than \$274 million in the Western New York region that has created or preserved affordable housing for about 9,250 residents, including nearly \$147 million devoted to projects such as AP Lofts that have produced or preserved 2,204 affordable apartments for more than 4,900 people in the City of Buffalo.



Left (above and below): the light well mid-construction/demolition

Right: Above: the finished light well, photographed from one of the new apartments; **Below:** a completed apartment with a view into the lightwell showing a refinished industrial support column

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Below: Two years after construction began, the AP Lofts, now fully occupied, anchors the community as a stable and viable structure that provides much-needed affordable housing, in keeping with the State's housing plan goals, while simultaneously celebrating and preserving the historic character of the neighborhood. <https://www.aploftsatlarkinville.com/>

