

NGBS GREEN CASE STUDY

Bluebird Supportive Housing



About the Project

Project Type: 3-story affordable, multifamily new construction with 40 permanent supportive housing units.

Units: 8 Studios, 32 one-bedrooms

Location: Boulder, Colorado

Performance: 2020 NGBS Green Certification – Silver Level (Feb 2024)

Website: [Bluebird Permanent Supportive Housing](#)

Project Team

Developer: [Element Properties](#)

Architect: [Shopworks Architecture](#)

Verifier: [Sarah Hong, Group14 Engineering](#)

A Better Place To Call Home

“Element Properties is proud to have worked with such an incredible group of designers, contractors, property managers, service providers, and financing partners to complete Bluebird. It was truly a team effort. The bluebird is a symbol of hope, love, and renewal, and this building is providing just that to 40 of the most vulnerable members of our community. It is a place that will change lives.”

– Catherine Bean, Principal at Element Properties



Overview

Bluebird Permanent Supportive Housing is a 40-unit, affordable, multifamily building in the Boulder Junction neighborhood of Colorado and provides housing to Boulder residents experiencing homelessness.

The project received federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Colorado state tax credits. The [Boulder Shelter for the Homeless](#) works with Bluebird Housing staff to provide residents with clinical mental health and peer supportive services, along with other resources contributed by community organizations including Meals on Wheels, Community Food Share, Clinical Family Health, etc.

Bluebird Supportive Housing is energy and water efficient and is designed with elements that promote health and wellness. Apartments are fully furnished with beds, sofas, tables, and chairs. The certification of this building marked the [500,000th NGBS Green Certified Home](#).

Several Health and Wellness elements were incorporated into this project including Universal Design to provide increased accessibility and options for future aging in place additions, MERV 13+ filters to capture airborne particulates and pollutants from regional wildfires, Central Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV) to provide fresh air ventilation and improved indoor air quality, and site selected to ensure access to community resources.

Trauma-Informed Design

In consideration of its resident population, Bluebird Supportive Housing was designed with [Trauma-Informed Design](#) strategies to provide a safe and supportive space for people who have been living on the streets for years. The design elements are intended to make the space feel more comfortable for residents and ease the transition of exiting homelessness.

A few of the Trauma-Informed Design elements in Bluebird Supportive Housing include:

- Extra soundproofing
- Walls painted with calming colors
- Large amenity spaces for supportive services

About Group14 Engineering

"Our mission is to transform the built environment to realize a more resilient future."

Group14 Engineering is a Denver-based consulting firm established in 1992 that provides sustainable design, energy efficiency, and building commissioning services for new and existing facilities. They are a certified Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE).

Group14 Engineering has provided verification services for 37 buildings that earned NGBS Green Certification. They currently have 177 projects in process for certification.

The Verifier Voice

"It feels so rewarding to be part of a team whose mission is driven by sustainability, clean energy, and the well-being of its residents. This is a project that will have a positive impact on its community, and we are proud to be a part of the effort in creating better affordable housing in Colorado!"

- Sarah Hong, Group14 Engineering, NGBS Green Verifier

Green Features/Practices

- Energy-efficient design; achieving an EUI (Energy Use Intensity) of 31.4 kbtu/SF/year; 21% below Colorado's 2030 benchmarking target
- Near bike paths, trails, and public transportation allowing residents to walk, reducing vehicle emissions
- 48kW onsite solar PV system; reducing building-wide GHG emissions by 12%
- Cold climate packaged heat pumps; providing a more efficient method for cooling and heating the building
- Central Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV) installed; reducing energy consumption and improving climate resilience
- ENERGY STAR Certified Appliances
- Water-conserving low-flow fixtures
- Health & Wellness Features:
 - ◆ Universal Design elements
 - ◆ MERV 13+ filters
 - ◆ Central Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV)
 - ◆ Located in the transit-oriented community ensuring accessibility of community resources

