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The Livingston brings 45 new affordable apartments to Columbus Near South for seniors age 55 plus

November 17, 2020, Columbus...To answer the significant need for more affordable senior housing options in the redeveloping Near South area of Columbus, affordable housing developer Woda Cooper Companies partnered with the Gertrude Wood Community Foundation and LifeCare Alliance to develop a high quality affordable senior community while paying tribute to a historic neighborhood icon, The Livingston Theater.



The Livingston is a newly-built, three-story building with an elevator that offers 45 energy-efficient one- and two-bedroom apartments for residents aged 55 and older who earn up to 60 percent of area median income. In addition to housing, an onsite wellness center and technology supports are incorporated to enhance quality of life.



The iconic streamline Livingston Theater marquee was brought back to life as a focal point along Livingston Avenue. Terrazzo flooring from the original theater lobby was restored within the new main entry.

Vintage architectural components incorporated

Key architectural components of the 1940s theater were incorporated into the new building at 1573 Livingston Avenue. “Although it was not feasible to adapt the decaying theater building for modern housing units, we understand the strong connections to this building as a neighborhood landmark,” says Joseph McCabe, Woda Cooper Vice President.

“Our architect, PCI Design Group, created a unique design that saved and incorporated a portion of theater lobby into the façade of the new building and we restored the marquee that had not been illuminated for almost a half century now,” said McCabe. “It has been transformed from an eyesore to a spectacular sight on Livingston Avenue.”

McCabe said units were snapped up quickly because of the great need in the neighborhood for safe and budget-friendly homes for seniors, coupled with convenience to many appealing amenities such as the recently-completed Driving Park Library, a renovated Driving Park Recreation Center, and upgraded public transportation. Nationwide Children’s Hospital offer a multitude of full and part-time jobs nearby and there are many churches, restaurants, businesses and other locations within a few miles.

Strong partnerships revitalize neighborhood, accommodate resident needs

“As a grassroots organization serving the Driving Park community for more than 15 years, the Gertrude Wood Community Found is proud to partner with Woda Cooper Companies and LifeCare Alliance to support quality affordable senior housing at The Livingston,” said Kay Rietz, Gertrude Wood’s Board Chair. “We are dedicated to our continuing role in the revitalization of safe neighborhood housing and services to support our senior residents.”

Free wi-fi is offered throughout the building and a computer lending program will be available to residents to help promote access to digital information. “Supporting our residents’ access to technology will help ensure their connections to valuable resources and helps increase digital literacy which is ever more important in today’s daily living environment.” McCabe said.

Nonprofit partner LifeCare Alliance will provide supportive services to assist residents with daily living needs and also provide onsite health consultation and wellness screenings. “LifeCare Alliance will operate a Wellness Center at The Livingston, which will provide a variety of services from nurses and dietitians,” said Charles Gehring, LifeCare Alliance’s President and CEO. “In addition, residents may take advantage of a variety of programs offered via LifeCare Alliance such as Meals-on-Wheels, Columbus Cancer Clinic, and Central Ohio Diabetes Association services, generally at no cost to them.”



The Livingston features a landscaped interior courtyard that offers an outdoor oasis away from the daily sights and sounds of the city – and includes raised garden beds, lush plantings, trellis and shade structures and even a playground for visiting children. Other community spaces include a community room with kitchen, business center, fitness room and an onsite management office. Green building materials and methods were incorporated throughout the building. It is expected to be certified as an Enterprise Green Community. PCI Design Group is architect with Woda Construction Inc. as general contractor and Woda Cooper Companies' management division overseeing leasing and day-to-day operations.

LIHTC supports financing

Financing for The Livingston was made possible through the allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits allocated by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA). "Central Ohio's senior population is expected to increase by 17% between now and 2030, faster than any other area of the state," said Kelan Craig, OHFA's Director of Multifamily Housing. "OHFA is pleased to partner with Woda Cooper Development by contributing housing tax credits to The Livingston to help meet the increasing demand for affordable housing for seniors in Columbus."

KeyBank was equity in investor and also provided a construction loan. Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust and the City of Columbus provided first and second mortgages. OHFA and Affordable Housing Trust of Columbus and Franklin County provided bridge loans.

"KeyBank and Woda Cooper Companies have missions that are very closely aligned. We both are committed to bring the resources necessary to develop high quality affordable housing to the many communities we serve," said Kelly A. Frank, Senior Vice President, KeyBank Real Estate Capital. We have been a partner with Woda for almost 20 years and The Livingston was an opportunity to bring together both our debt and equity platforms to provide the capital to transform this building to a thriving community."

For more information about The Livingston, visit www.wodagroup.com or call 614-396-3200.

About Woda Cooper Companies, Inc.

Woda Cooper Companies, Inc. and its affiliates specialize in the development, design, construction, and management of high-quality affordable multi-family apartments, senior communities, and single-family homes. The company marked 30 years in business May 2, 2020, with operations in 15 states and a portfolio of approximately 350 communities and more than 14,000 units. Green building is standard with certifications including Passive House, Zero Energy Ready Homes, LEED, Enterprise Green, EarthCraft, and ENERGY STAR. In addition to its Columbus headquarters, Woda Cooper has offices in Savannah, GA; Indianapolis, IN; Shelbyville, KY; Annapolis, MD; Mackinaw City, MI; Charlotte, NC; and Norfolk, VA. Affordable Housing Finance magazine ranked Woda Cooper Companies 10th in nation among Developers and 14th among Owners on May 1, 2020.

Additional images follow. High resolution files of all images available upon request (kbernick@wodagroup.com).





Gazebo provides high-quality outdoor living space at The Livingston. Located in the center of the development, the courtyard is accessible to residents and offers a park-like amenity away from the sights and sounds of the urban neighborhood



Other community spaces include a community room with kitchenette, computer center, and fitness room. The community room occupies a space that was longtime home of the neighborhood Siegel Drug Store. The reinstatement of large windows into the façade helped restore the existing building’s prominent corner stature and brings generous natural light into the space.