VILLAGE de Jardin

Award Category:

- ☐ Family (more than 50% of units are for families)
- ☐ Green
- ☐ Historic Rehab
- ☐ Homeownership
- ☐ Master-Planned/Mixed-Use
- ☐ Preservation of Assisted Housing
- ☐ Rural (in a place with fewer than 25,000 inhabitants)
- ■ **Seniors**
- ☐ Special Needs/SRO
- ☐ Urban

Person Making Nomination:

Name and Title: Milton Bailey, President
Company: Louisiana Housing Finance Agency
Address: 2415 Quail Drive
City, State, Zip: Baton Rouge, LA. 70808-0110
Phone: 225-763-8700
Fax: 225-810-5179
E-mail: mbailey@lhfa.state.la.us

Project You Are Nominating:

Project name: **Village de Jardin**
Complete address: 110 South I-10 Service Road
New Orleans, LA 70118
Expected completion date: 08/2011
Developer: Louisiana Housing Finace Agency
Name of contact/Managing GP: Roger Tijerino
Address: 2415 Quail Drive
Baton Rouge, LA. 70808-0110
Phone: 225-763-8700
Web site: http://www.lhfa.state.la.us/

CONGREGATE BUILDING RENDERING

VIEW AT MAIN COURTYARD AND APARTMENT-FLATS

Project Information:

Total development cost of project: $49,254,564
Hard construction costs: $40,430,000
Total number of units: 226
Total number of income-targeted, rent-restricted units:

Since Village de Jardin is not a Low Income Housing Tax Credit development, there will not be any income targeted, rent-restricted units. However, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) stipulates that "seventy-five (75) units shall be maintained as housing for low to moderate-income families. In addition, Village de Jardin will provide senior housing to eligible residents age 55 or older, as well as handicapped individuals with adjusted gross incomes at or below eighty (80) percent of the median income for the area."

Total development cost per income-targeted, rent-restricted unit:

There will not be any "income-targeted, rent-restricted units" since this project is not a Low Income Housing Tax Credit development. However, as stated previously, seventy-five (75) units will be maintained as housing for low to moderate-income families.

Total development cost per unit for all units:

$219,886.45

Total tax credit allocation (total credit over 10 years):

Village de Jardin is not a Low Income Housing Tax Credit Development.

Federal tax credits per tax credit eligible unit:

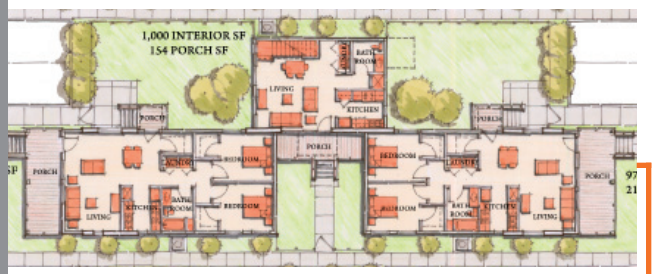
Village de Jardin is not a Low Income Housing Tax Credit Development.

Describe state and local subsidies for this project. Please give a total amount for grants and soft loans from each level of government:

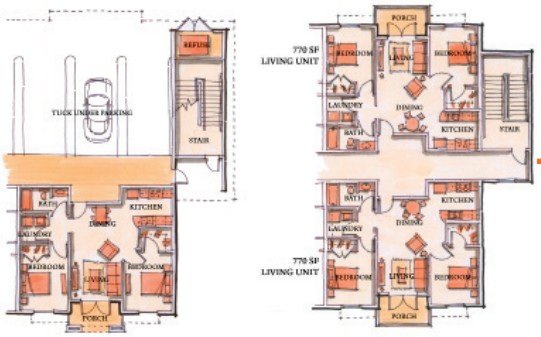
Village de Jardin has been funded solely through FEMA due to the damages suffered as a result of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. No State or Local government subsidies were requested or received for the Village de Jardin development. FEMA recognized the existing facility was in an irreparable state, and thus awarded funds for the full cost of replacement.

GARDEN HOME
10 UNITS

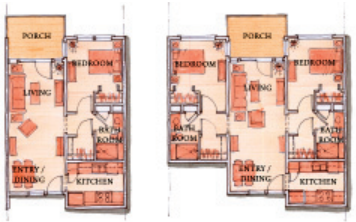
CARPET HOME
24 UNITS



APARTMENT FLATS
42 UNITS



CONGREGATE
150 UNITS



Give the number of units per unit type:

One Bedroom – 142 units

Proposed Max. Monthly Rent: $727

Two Bedroom – 82 units

Proposed Max. Monthly Rent: $874

Give the average square footage and rent per unit type:

One bedroom - 750 SF

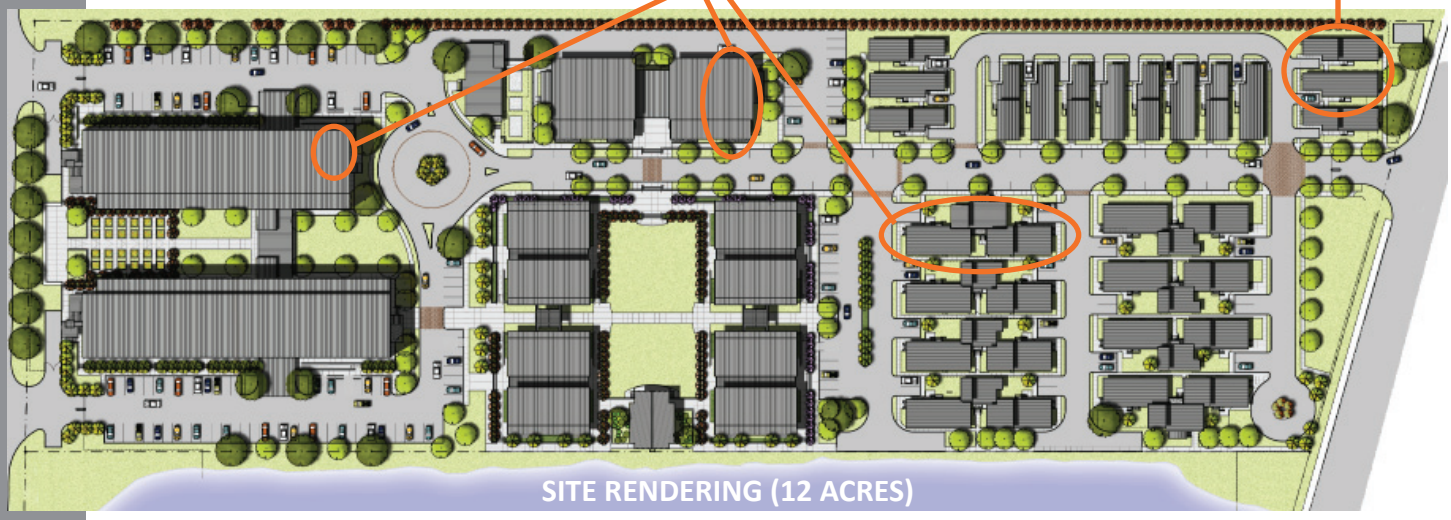
Two bedroom - 1200 SF

Give the approximate percentage of units set aside for each maximum tenant income level:

Although there is no official number of units set aside for each maximum tenant income level, "seventy-five (75) units shall be maintained as housing for low to moderate-income families." Therefore, approximately 33% of the units are income-targeted. In addition to the income-targeted units, all units will be available to applicants who hold housing vouchers. Rent for voucher-assisted units will be calculated at 30% of the tenant's monthly adjusted income.

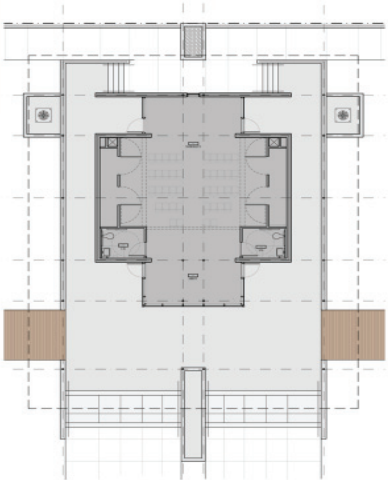
Project architect:

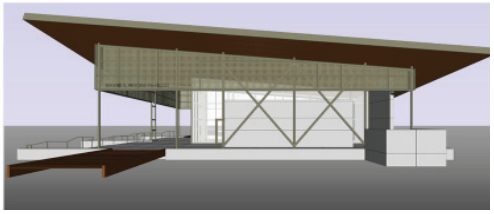
Holly & Smith Architects, APAC
208 North Cate Street
Hammond, Louisiana 70401
(985) 345-5210



SITE RENDERING (12 ACRES)

Village de Jardin is under construction as a replacement for the Gaslight Apartments which were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. All funding was received from FEMA as a replacement allowance in the amount of $49,254,564, which covered the full cost of the replacement. The Louisiana Housing Finance Agency's goal is to demonstrate how emergency funds awarded due to catastrophic events can result in the efficient and effective use of public funds, as well as a better built environment that positively affects the contiguous community.





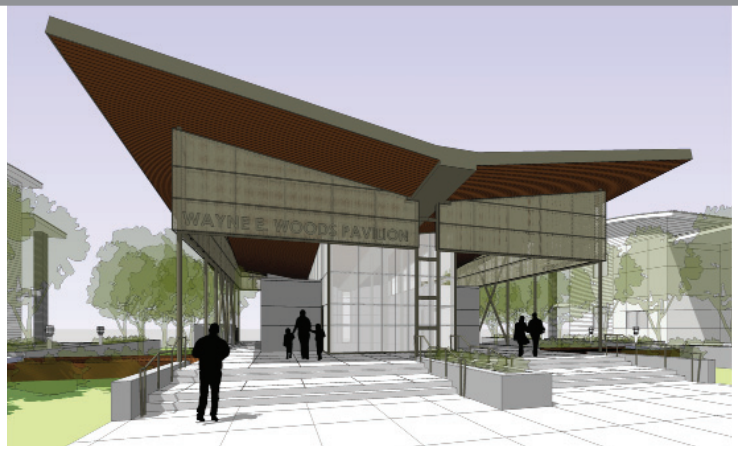
Why does the nominated project deserve to be recognized based on the award criteria of this contest? What makes the project unique?

The eastern part of New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. As a result, rental housing stock in the area was almost completely depleted. This development will add substantially to the housing stock in the area as well as provide a safe, secure community for older citizens returning to the area. Upon its completion in late summer 2011, Village de Jardin will be a new, independent-living, senior housing community in eastern New Orleans. It is anticipated that rental of the units should begin by October 2011.

Because of the hurricane, commercial as well as residential structures were destroyed, with the result being that very little restoration has taken place. With no customers living in the area, businesses are reluctant to rebuild, and with no retail services nearby, including medical services, residents are hesitant to return to the area. As a partial solution to that problem, Village de Jardin will be a mixed-use senior residential community. In addition to one and two bedroom units, the development will include retail rental space as well as a medical clinic to be staffed by the LSU Health Sciences Center Health Care Services Division. This clinic will be the first available Health Clinic in New Orleans East, which represents over 40% of the city's land mass. When displaced residents become aware that necessary services are returning to the area, they will be more inclined to return. Likewise, when the business community becomes aware that potential customers are returning to the area, they will also return.

In addition to the social impact of this development, Village de Jardin will have a physical effect on the area, as well. For example, one of many drainage canals that serve the City of New Orleans runs along the western edge of this property. Typically, these drainage canals are not viewed favorably, and usually serve as "rear-yards" to residential and commercial developments. Instead of an eyesore, the Louisiana Finance Housing Agency is lobbying the City of New Orleans to turn it into an attractive water feature. The idea is for residents to enjoy a stroll along the canal to observe many varieties of native waterfowl and plant-life. In addition to being utilitarian, the canal will provide a recreational amenity for tenants. The issue of improving the myriad drainage canals in New Orleans has become a front-page issue since the City of New Orleans was recently awarded federal funds to examine how this can be achieved.

LHFA is providing an innovative solution to a specific development challenge by setting an example for other developers in the New Orleans area with its response to the catastrophic Hurricane Katrina. This disastrous occurrence turned into a opportunity to upgrade and increase the housing stock in New Orleans East. The area was so terribly devastated after Hurricane Katrina that, for a time, it appeared that New Orleans, the eastern portion in particular, would never recover. Due in large part to the efforts of LHFA, the prospects for the area have greatly improved. Additionally, many seniors in the New Orleans East area are unable to return due to the lack of health services and commercial amenities. The inclusion of on-site health care and commercial services will address many of these seniors' needs.



What are any new methods in financing, construction, or delivering housing and services that the project pioneers or utilizes?

The emergency funding received from FEMA is being used as a positive example for post-Katrina recovery efforts. Village de Jardin will demonstrate an efficient and socially responsible development upon its completion.

Who is the population that the project serves?

Village de Jardin will primarily serve a currently displaced population of senior citizens able to live independently and who are former residents of Eastern New Orleans. Uprooted due to the ravages of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many of these senior citizens currently reside with family members in and around the New Orleans area as well as throughout the United States. They are anxiously awaiting an opportunity to return to their hometown of New Orleans. Even though they are aware that it will not be the same as when they left, it will still be New Orleans, and it will still be "home."

Based on the response to date and the growing interest in Village de Jardin as the project nears completion, the estimated occupancy rates appear obtainable. Inquiries have already been received from as far away as Chicago.

What are the social services that are provided to residents?

Resident amenities will include enhanced access to services provided by the Orleans Parish Council on Aging as well as New Orleans Area Catholic Charities. Village de Jardin will partner with both of these agencies, as well as others social services throughout the area, through its Tenant Resource Center.

A particular post-Katrina characteristic of eastern New Orleans is the lack of medical services. This major shortcoming will be addressed by the inclusion of an on-site medical clinic. LSU has committed to establishing a geriatric clinic to serve the residents of Village de Jardin and the surrounding community. The clinic will be staffed by the LSU Medical School, a division of Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, and the LSU School of Nursing.

Other amenities within the development include a library, computer center, and retail services such as a hair salon, coffee shop, bookstore and other related medical service providers. Laundry facilities will be located next to community rooms on each residential floor of the two towers. The Garden Homes and Carpet Cottages will each have individual washer and dryer hook-ups. Additionally, transportation will be provided throughout the complex and the surrounding community.

The development's design enables tenants and visitors to gather at various public green spaces provided at strategic locations. One of the most prominent green spaces is directly in the center of the development and surrounded by the mixed-use apartments. On the west side of this green space is a small community building which becomes a back drop for the green space and provides a plaza for gathering.

What is the impact the project has had on residents?

Community Focus Groups held during the development phase indicate that Village de Jardin will play a major role in the anticipated redevelopment of the eastern portion of New Orleans. Senior citizens who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to return to their hometown.

The availability of an on-site medical clinic will add greatly to the sense of security and well-being of the residents of Village de Jardin. Other amenities such as the library, community rooms, laundry facilities, garden areas, and a pedestrian-way along an attractive, well-maintained water feature, will enhance the feeling of community involvement and connectedness. These amenities will be enhanced by a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week security system, thereby alleviating the concern for safety of elderly residents.

What is the role the project has had on overall community revitalization or change?

As a result of Hurricane Katrina, most of eastern New Orleans' commercial and residential structures were destroyed. Since 2005, very little rebuilding and restoration has taken place. Recently released U.S. census figures show that New Orleans East has experienced the least repopulation since Hurricane Katrina. With no customers living in the area, businesses have been reluctant to rebuild, and with few retail services nearby, including medical services, residents have been hesitant to return to the area.

As a partial solution to the problem, Village de Jardin will provide retail rental space as well as a medical clinic to be staffed by the LSU Medical School. When displaced residents become aware that critical services are returning to the area, they should return in greater numbers. Likewise, when the business community becomes aware that potential customers are returning to the area, they will also return. This has already been manifested by the recent reopening of a drug store a few hundred yards from the site of Village de Jardin.

In general, what evidence can you offer to describe the housing needs that the project meets, such as how far below market rents are rents for this project's affordable units, how quickly did they lease up, how much of a waiting list is there, does the project compete with other tax credit deals in the same market?

Two (2) recent market studies conducted for the eastern portion of New Orleans both demonstrate a need for affordable senior housing in the area. The most recent, a March 2011 market study entitled "New Orleans Market Assessment" which was conducted by the University of New Orleans, indicates that occupancy rates in New Orleans East tend to fluctuate. The analysis shows that smaller developments have a higher occupancy rate, and that these rates are strongest for mixed income properties. Recent apartment occupancy trends, according to this study, indicate that occupancy rates for market-rate and income-restricted units are nearly identical.

The second market study, which was conducted by Cook, Moore & Associates and dated October 6, 2010, states that population within the trade area has significantly decreased since 1990 and was significantly impacted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A review of income demographics for the trade area indicates that the area has under-

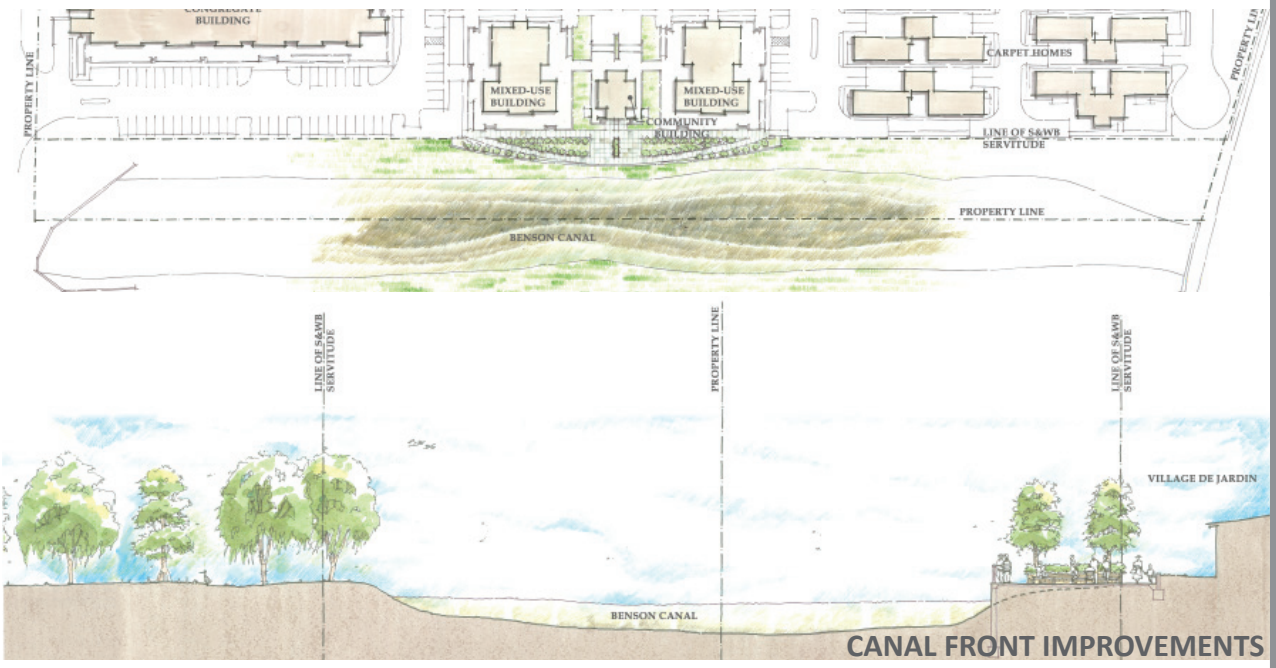
gone a transformation since Hurricane Katrina. The Average Household Income for the trade area was $30,750 in 1990; however, by 2000 it had risen to $42,152. In 2010, the AHI is estimated at $47,854. In 1990, over 65.7% of the area's households earned less than $35,000 per year. By 2000, that number had dwindled to approximately 52.2% and was projected to be further decreased to 42.9% in 2010. For ELDERLY HOUSEHOLDS (defined as Age 55+), the Average Household Income for the trade area was $42,885 in 2000 and was projected to increase to $48,544 in 2010. In 2000, over 53% of the area's elderly households earned less than $35,000 per year. By 2010, that number was projected to have dwindled to 41.6%. These income levels are generally sufficient to support the rentals projected for the new units. Although apartment complexes report an average occupancy rate of 81% for eastern New Orleans, the occupancy rate for senior housing reported an average occupancy rate of 98.4%, with most maintaining significant waiting lists.

Village de Jardin is designed to serve low to moderate income elderly citizens in the Greater New Orleans area. Of the 224 units, 75 (or 33%) will serve elderly citizens with an annual income at 80% or less of the Area Median Income. According to recent HUD data, the market monthly rent for a one-bedroom unit is $840 while the market rent for a two-bedroom unit is $982. The expected rents for Village de Jardin affordable units will not go above HUD's high rent limit of $727 for a one-bedroom unit. With the projected make-up of a mixed-income property and the reported recent success of mixed-income properties by the aforementioned market studies, Village de Jardin should successfully attract the interest of low to moderate income individuals as well as those living at or above the area median income.

What type of community support has this project received, including any state and local financial assistance.

The Louisiana Housing Finance Agency received full funding for the redevelopment of Gaslight Apartments from FEMA. Renamed Village de Jardin, the project has been eagerly awaited by all members of the community, including local, state and national leaders. Influential supporters for the project include a former State Senator from the district where Village de Jardin is located, U.S. Senators and Representatives from Louisiana, and New Orleans' City Council members. These individuals were very influential in promoting the project and helped provide a great deal of community involvement in its development, including the formation and hosting of several focus groups consisting of potential tenants and neighborhood stakeholders. In addition, national leaders assisted with communications with HUD so that Gaslight could become a community for senior residents. This collaborative effort among public officials helped the project through the development stages and onto the market where many of their constituents will undoubtedly reside when the project is complete.

GARDEN HOMES STREET PERSPECTIVE



CANAL FRONT IMPROVEMENTS

What evidence can you provide about the cost-effectiveness of your project, i.e., providing housing at substantially below-market rents (or home prices) at a reasonable subsidy cost per unit?

The Louisiana Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) acquired Gaslight Square Apartments from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via an Act of Sale dated September 29, 1995. The Deed agreement stipulated that a portion of the development must be maintained as affordable rental housing for low to moderate-income families for a period of at least 30 years, which will be until September 29, 2025.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and Gaslight Square Apartments were completely flooded. At the time of the hurricane, the estimated replacement value of the Gaslight complex was $12,619,110.00. FEMA reviewed the damages and determined that Gaslight was eligible to receive $49,254,564.00 for a replacement facility. In April 2008, a Deed amendment was executed with HUD designating Gaslight as a senior housing community for residents 55 or older and reducing the number of units from 270 to 224. Pre-construction activities ensued, including asbestos abatement, demolition and site-loading. A design team was selected via a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), the design was completed and, in September 2009, a general contractor was chosen. All selections were made through a public-bid process, thus assuring the lowest costs. Since Gaslight was an LHFA-owned property, the Agency has acted as its own Developer for Village de Jardin, which is the replacement for Gaslight Square Apartments. In addition, Project Management has been provided by the Louisiana Office of Facility Planning and Control at no charge, thus providing increased efficiency in the redevelopment process.

There is no mortgage or construction loan to repay since the property was transferred to the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, and FEMA provided full funding for the redevelopment. As a result, LHFA will be able to offer rents at below market rates. LHFA recognizes that it does not wish to compete with other Developers -- who, after all, are LHFA's clientele -- but hopes to demonstrate how a public agency can use emergency funds efficiently and effectively to achieve its goals and mission, thus establishing a benchmark for future responses by public entities to catastrophic events.

CONSTRUCTION PHOTOS

AERIAL PHOTO TAKEN 2010.12.21

DETAIL

GARDEN HOME

AERIAL PHOTO TAKEN 2011.03.24