

Vacant lot transformed into affordable and supportive riverfront housing.

Built on a former fabric factory site, this new community offers 80 units of affordable and stable housing for those in need. It symbolizes renewal for Oswego residents by revitalizing a long-vacant, contaminated property and contributing to downtown's resurgence.

The community is designed to support a mix of income-constrained residents and individuals with physical disabilities, in mental health recovery, and struggling with homelessness. The on-site staff help this diverse population overcome their challenges. The program includes office space for building management and resident support staff, and ample meeting space where staff meet with residents individually or in groups to assist with their needs. The community room and scattered lounge spaces allow residents to gather in groups of various sizes while the generous elevated deck offers views of the river and downtown.

The shape of the narrow site atop a bluff overlooking the Oswego River and Lock Number 7 dictated the building form and arrangement. The existing high point is at the north end of the site, one full story above grade at the south end. This topography was utilized to create an at-grade lobby entrance at the north end of the building and an at-grade entrance at the south end to sheltered parking below the building. Remediation efforts required by the site's previous use aligned well with the minimal excavation required for the parking.

The linear building form is broken into three offsetting masses to modulate the building's street presence and break up lines of sight along interior circulation. First floor office, meeting, and gathering spaces are arranged at the north end where the street grade aligns with the interior, enhancing activity at the urban edge. Exterior material selection and composition creates a strong form when viewed from a distance and offers visual interest for passing motorists and pedestrians.

AIA's Framework for Design Excellence

This **Equitable Community** provides much-needed quality, affordable housing for overlooked and vulnerable people. Half the apartments surpass code-minimum accessibility standards, with 20 units fully adapted for residents with mobility impairments. Residents who were formerly homeless and residents navigating mental health challenges are offered the support they need to overcome the obstacles they face, with additional staff space and meeting areas providing flexibility for different needs. Organized and informal social gatherings are accommodated in the community room, lounges, meeting rooms, and elevated deck overlooking the river. These human-scaled spaces allow for relationships between residents to form naturally and combine with staff-organized events to foster the growth of a community that cares for and supports one another. Its walkable location close to downtown promotes equity by giving residents easy access to services, job opportunities, and social interactions.

Economy is at the core of our **Design** process, but not in terms of cheap materials and labor. We find meaningful and impactful design solutions within the project's budget that create beautiful, affordable, and functional homes. This starts with a focus on efficiency in the design of apartments. Individual elements are repeated across apartments, including kitchen and bath layouts, door and closet sizes, window sizes, etc. This helps maximize economies of scale, allows for efficient prefabrication of framing and other building elements, and minimizes costly errors during construction. The resources saved with this approach are used to enhance the design of community and support areas and for upgraded materials throughout the project selected for beauty and durability. This process is underpinned by a collaborative approach with the design team, owner, and contractor all involved in decision-making from the beginning of the design phase. All parties work together to balance function, cost, and aesthetics for the benefit of future residents.

Our **Integrated Design** process includes site, sustainability, environmental, mechanical, and electrical consultants. This comprehensive team works together to ensure the building outperforms minimum requirements in terms of energy efficiency and occupant health and comfort. The project's energy and water use are reduced to levels that qualify for additional state funding incentives, and brownfield remediation systems are integrated into the design to transform a long-vacant site into a thriving, healthy community. The resulting project helps stitch together the surrounding community fabric, with pedestrian connections across the river to downtown and along the river to the lake front. The building's unique location gives residents an outdoor gathering area that overlooks the river and is sheltered from street traffic. The building form takes its queues from the site's manufacturing history, utilizing a large simple form with repeating vertical elements that hearken back to the former shade cloth factory located there. These forms are interpreted through a contemporary design lens to create a connection between past and future. The offsetting massing, overall proportions, variety of materiality and textures, and careful detailing engage the viewer from a range of distances, offering delight to adjacent pedestrians and encouraging drivers from farther away to consider an unintended detour.

AIA Rochester Community Impact Award

Secure, stable housing offers a brighter future for residents and symbolizes the rebirth of downtown Oswego.

As DePaul's services expanded across New York state, they became aware of a severe shortage of affordable and supportive housing in the northern part of the state. They met with City and County officials to confirm Oswego as a good location and identified a downtown site on the Oswego River, previously slated for development but left empty after multiple projects fell through.

Lock 7 Apartments, named for a neighboring portion of the Oswego Canal, provides 80 units of secure and stable housing for a diverse population, including low-income residents, individuals with physical disabilities, people in mental health recovery, and formerly homeless individuals. By addressing the housing needs of these vulnerable groups, Lock 7 fosters a sense of stability and community, enabling residents to thrive despite their challenges.

The four-story building offers studio, one-, and two-bedroom affordable apartments for households earning at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. Forty apartments are for homeless households, including seniors and individuals with mental illness. Twenty units are accessible for residents with mobility challenges, and all others are adaptable. Amenities include a 750 SF community room, laundry on each floor, fitness equipment, lounges, and a deck with views of the Oswego River and downtown.

The building is located on the banks of the Oswego River, six city blocks from Lake Ontario and close to downtown Oswego. The location puts residents within walking distance of options for recreation, shopping, medical support, and entertainment. The building design is based on a traditional downtown urban approach. It is a four-story building situated adjacent to the public right of way which engages the area around the site making it part of the downtown fabric.

One of the most profound impacts of Lock 7 is the revitalization of a long-vacant, contaminated property. The site, previously home to a fabric factory, had been an eyesore and a reminder of the city's industrial past. Through the New York State Brownfield Cleanup Program, the site was remediated, transforming it into a safe and welcoming environment. This redevelopment not only provides much-needed housing but also symbolizes renewal and hope for the Oswego community.

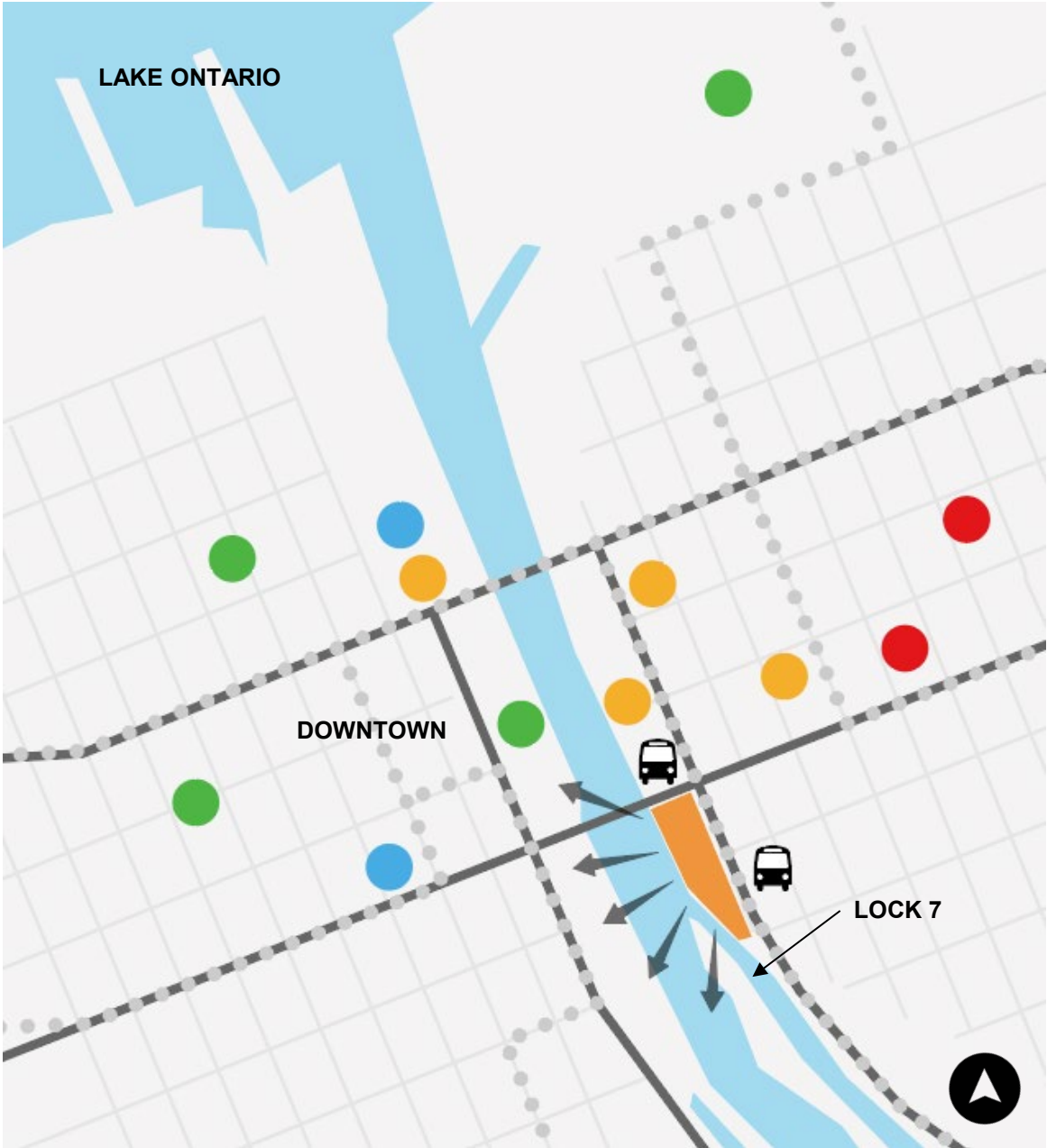
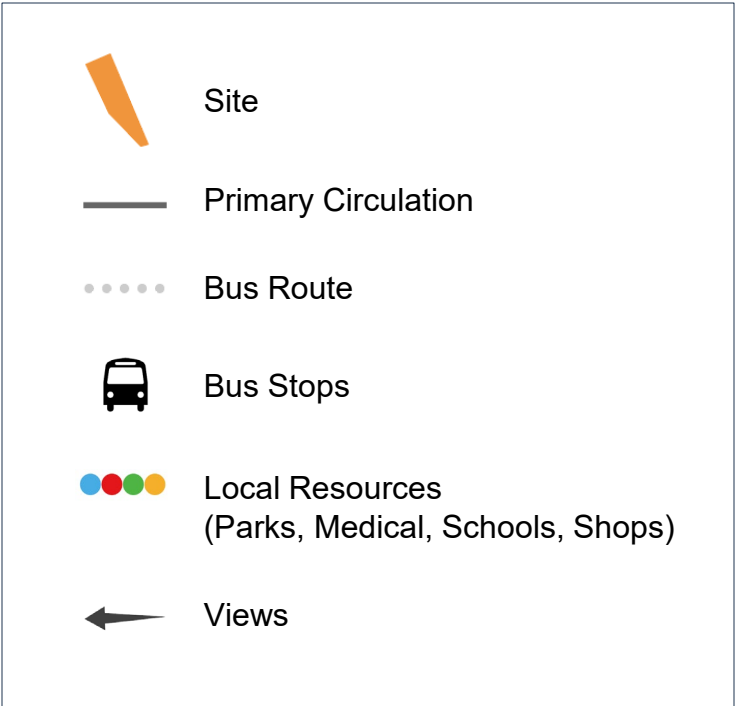
The project has also had a significant environmental impact. The remediation of the contaminated site improves local environmental quality, reducing health risks for residents and the surrounding community. Its sustainable design features, such as energy-efficient appliances and systems, contribute to reduced energy consumption and lower utility costs for residents, promoting energy efficiency.

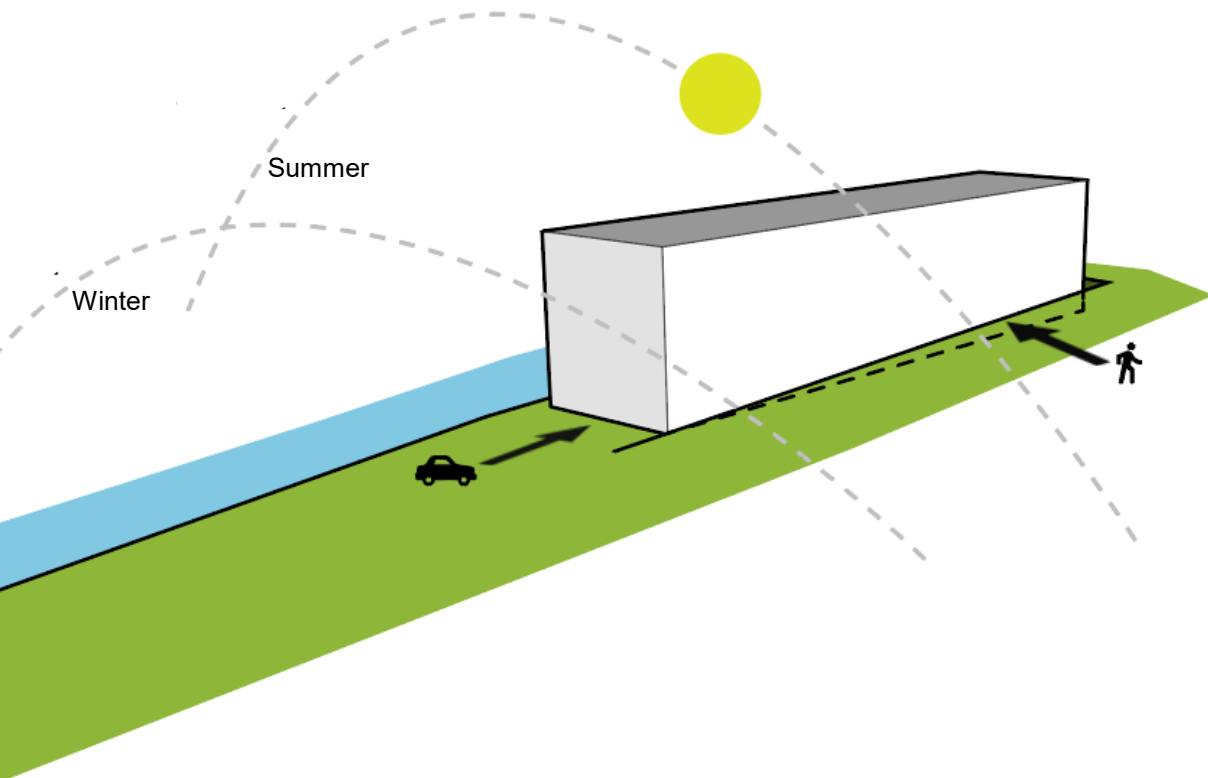
"This new \$26 million development adds to Oswego's resurgence and solidifies downtown as a great place to live, work and visit. The State's efforts to convert the city's unused manufacturing properties into affordable housing has created 225 new homes this year alone and boosted economic growth by creating a more active and thriving downtown," NYS HCR Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas.

Starting in the 1830's, as much as 75% of the nation's shade cloth was produced at this location. The factory closed and was abandoned in the 1980s. Despite multiple previous failed development attempts, the site sat empty after the factory was demolished in 1997.

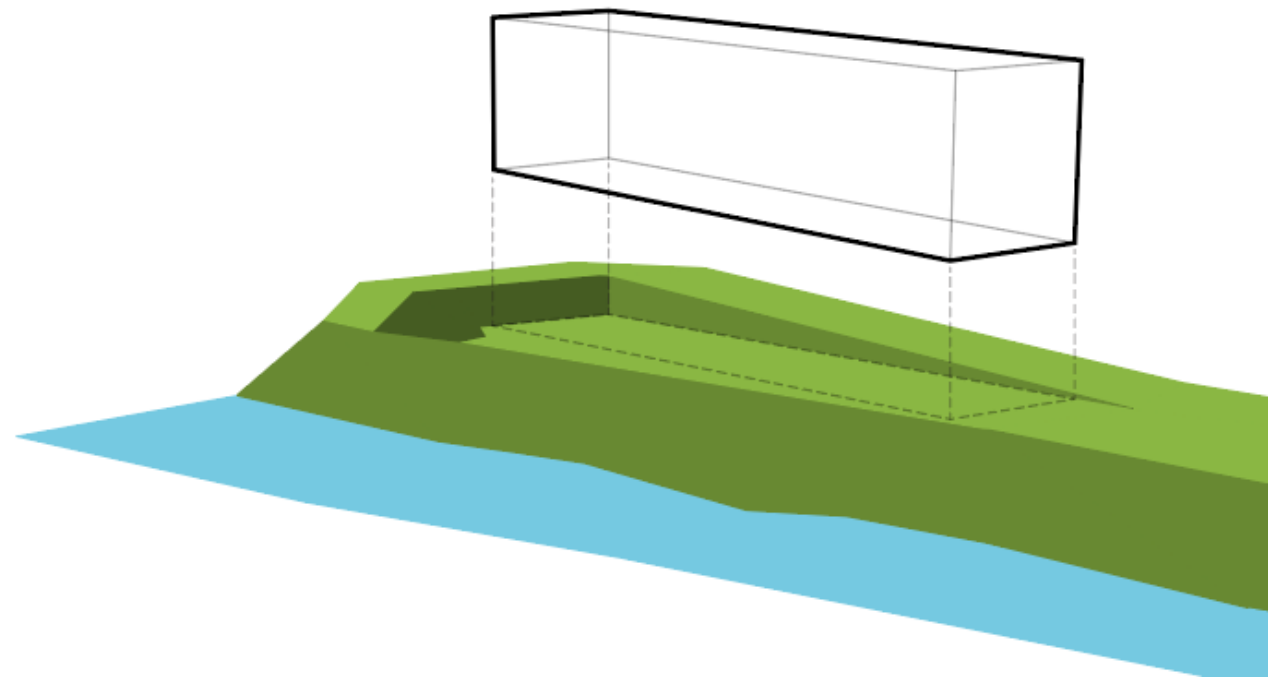


The project's location near downtown and Lake Ontario offers residents convenient access to amenities and resources. It offers access to views across the river - a rare amenity for an affordable housing community.





The street on the east edge of the site starts at a high point at the northeast corner and drops off as it moves south. The interior of the site was excavated nearly flat from the demolition of the previous structures. This topography allows for an at-grade pedestrian entrance at the north end of the building, adjacent to the primary intersection, and an at-grade vehicular entrance at the south end to sheltered parking below the building, with minimal excavation required.



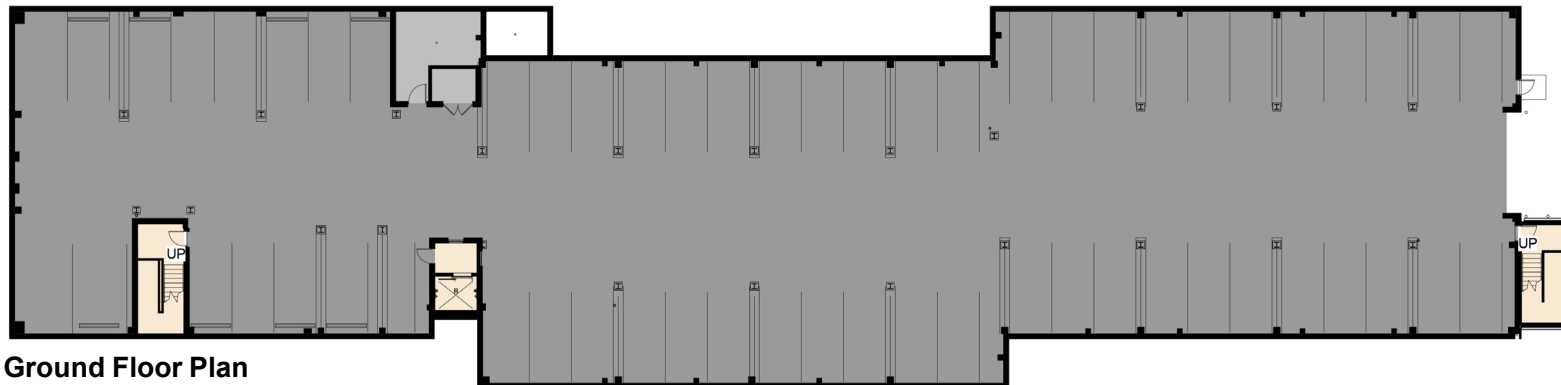
The narrow site, with a long axis oriented almost due north-south, drove the building parti and the existing topography provided some unique opportunities. The resulting bar building offers excellent views across the Oswego River and Lock 7 of the Oswego Canal to downtown and the hills beyond but also faces solar control challenges with long east- and west-facing facades exposed to lower sun angles.



Upper Floor Plan



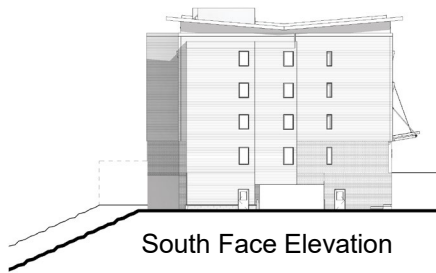
First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

- Studio Unit
- 1 Bedroom Unit
- 2 Bedroom Unit
- Circulation
- Common Spaces
- Support Spaces
- Staff Spaces
- Parking





The linear parti is broken into three offsetting masses to modulate the overall scale of the building. This also reduces internal site lines and allows for moments of variety and repose along the central circulation path. Brick provides a durable base to the building, with fiber cement plank and panel utilized on upper stories to manage costs without sacrificing longevity. The tan brick and warm wood tones of the fiber cement help offset the long and cold winters with a memory of fall colors throughout the year.





Traditional Mill Building

Repeating vertical elements offer a contemporary reflection of traditional mill building rhythms, while the primary entrance at the north end of the site is accentuated through the increased use of brick and lighter colors. An abundance of glazing at the ground level connects building staff and residents to the wider community.

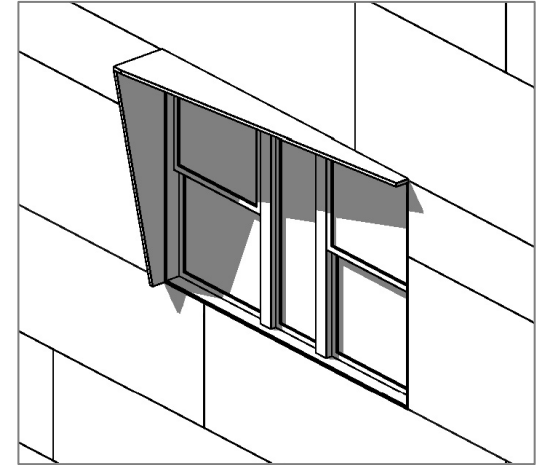




Historic Canal Lock

The recessed entry with the canopy cables and contrasting color panel overhead evokes a lifted canal lock gate inviting guests to pass through; a motif referenced by the railing overlooking the lobby inside.





Deep set windows and folded window shades help shelter the long east and west facades from solar heat gain.



Lounges on each floor take advantage of views across the river and offer opportunities for smaller gatherings and quiet respite, while the main community room has space for informal gatherings, organized events, life-skills training, and other support programs. A lounge just off the lobby provides residents a place to watch comings and goings, with a fireplace offering warmth through the winter chill.



The elevated deck just outside the community room allows residents to enjoy sunny days while watching activity on the river and appreciate the views of downtown and the hills beyond.



Settling into the existing topography rather than fighting it, the building configuration connects residents to downtown and the lake, and the building mass helps frame the approach to the core of the city.