

Project Description/Narrative

In response to the need for safe, affordable housing in the City of Ithaca, NY, this new 60-unit mixed use apartment building is located on a ¾-acre site in the West End District, serving a mixed population of individuals. 22 of the units will be available to the general community with limited income, while the remaining 38 will house individuals who have experienced low/no income, homelessness, and/or are recovering from serious mental illness, substance use disorders or HIV/AIDS. The one-bedroom units provide those with special needs the opportunity to live in a supportive environment, near essential community services in an established, walkable neighborhood.

The 5-story L-shaped building is designed to maximize the tight urban site. This is accomplished by locating the building close to the street, with reduced surface parking in the rear. The building wraps a south-facing courtyard, strategically placed to connect with the light-filled Community Room. Therapeutic landscaping enhances the exterior spaces.

The main entrance addresses the street corner, with a terra cotta-hued tower. The cantilever provides shade and protection from the elements, with a natural wood plank soffit. Large windows wrap the corner in the apartment living rooms above. The red-orange banding activates the facades at different elevations. Tall transparent storefront glazing provides views into the main lobby. Ground-face masonry, and a charcoal-hued band wraps the perimeter, with mottled insulated aluminum panels above.

The building's circulation is straightforward, with corridors running east-west, terminating at large windows on each end. This allows natural light to permeate the interior and provide views out to the street and to Cornell University's campus on the hills beyond. Each floor has a central common lounge with transparent curtainwall cladding, contributing to the bright, welcoming interior. The apartments have high ceilings and open plans that enhance the feeling of comfort and spaciousness in modestly sized units. The color palate of the interior and exterior includes warm, natural hues to provide a therapeutic environment. Wayfinding is reinforced with supergraphics on each floor level near the main stair and elevator.

The all-electric HVAC systems with individual controls, highly insulated building envelope, and natural ventilation contribute to the building's LEED for Homes Gold status, Energy Star certification, and Ithaca Green Building Policy compliance.

AIA's Framework for Design Excellence

Design for Equitable Communities: How does this project contribute to creating a walkable, human-scaled community inside and outside the property lines?

Serving a mixed population of individuals, 22 of the units will be available to the general community with limited income, while the remaining 38 will house individuals who have experienced low/no income, homelessness and/or are recovering from serious mental illness, substance use disorders or HIV/AIDS. The one-bedroom units provide those with special needs the opportunity to live in a supportive environment, near essential community services in an established, walkable neighborhood. The design addresses the human-scale in a number of ways, including generously-landscaped planting beds, shade trees, exterior seating areas, a courtyard with a pergola, a cantilevered entrance tower to provide shelter and shade, and numerous walking paths. Interior circulation and wayfinding, large windows, supergraphics at each floor level, shared common lounges, laundry and Community Room, apartments with high ceilings and open plans also reinforce the human scale.

Design for Economy: How does the project efficiently meet the program and design challenges and provide “more with less”?

The building was funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits through NYS Homes and Community Renewal (NYSHCR), Homeless Housing Assistance Program (HHAP), and the NYS Office of Mental Health (NYSOMH), requiring “cost containment”. The program and design challenges were addressed while maintaining a modest construction budget by using podium construction (4 stories of wood framing over non-combustible ground floor elements), providing a simple, straightforward building layout, stacking all programmed spaces to allow for plumbing and HVAC components to be run in the same chases, while spending more funds in the selected “impact” spaces that are experienced and enjoyed by all, such as common area wood ceilings and large curtainwall glazing in lounges and the Community Room.

Design for Energy: Is the project energy-efficient and sustainable while improving building performance, function, comfort, and enjoyment?

The building is certified as LEED for Homes Gold, Energy Star, and Ithaca Green Building Policy compliance. The all-electric HVAC systems with individual controls, highly-insulated building envelope, and natural ventilation contribute to energy efficiency while increasing the residents' comfort. The City of Ithaca has begun to fully decarbonize its buildings as the first phase of a 100% carbon-free climate policy.

Design for Wellness: How does the design promote the health of the occupants?

The building and site design promote the health and wellness of the occupants in several ways. The location in an established, walkable neighborhood close to essential services, parks, and the farmers market enable the residents to easily access these places on foot or on bicycle. By including abundant green space, landscaping, walk paths, exterior seating, and south-facing courtyard, the residents will enjoy spending time on the building grounds. Large transparent glazing and operable windows allow for residents' enjoyment and fresh air, as well as provide views to the scenic surroundings. Straightforward circulation, pleasant common areas including a Community Room and lounges on each floor, and natural materials and color palette contribute to the wellness of the residents.

AIA Rochester Community Impact Award

Community Impact:

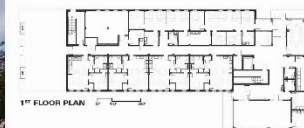
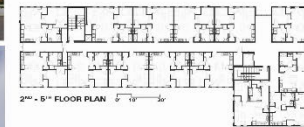
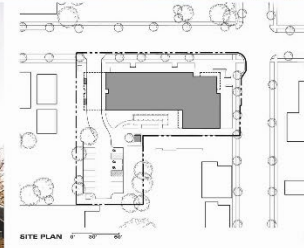
Lakeview Health Services, serving the Finger Lakes Region of New York State, has the following Mission Statement:

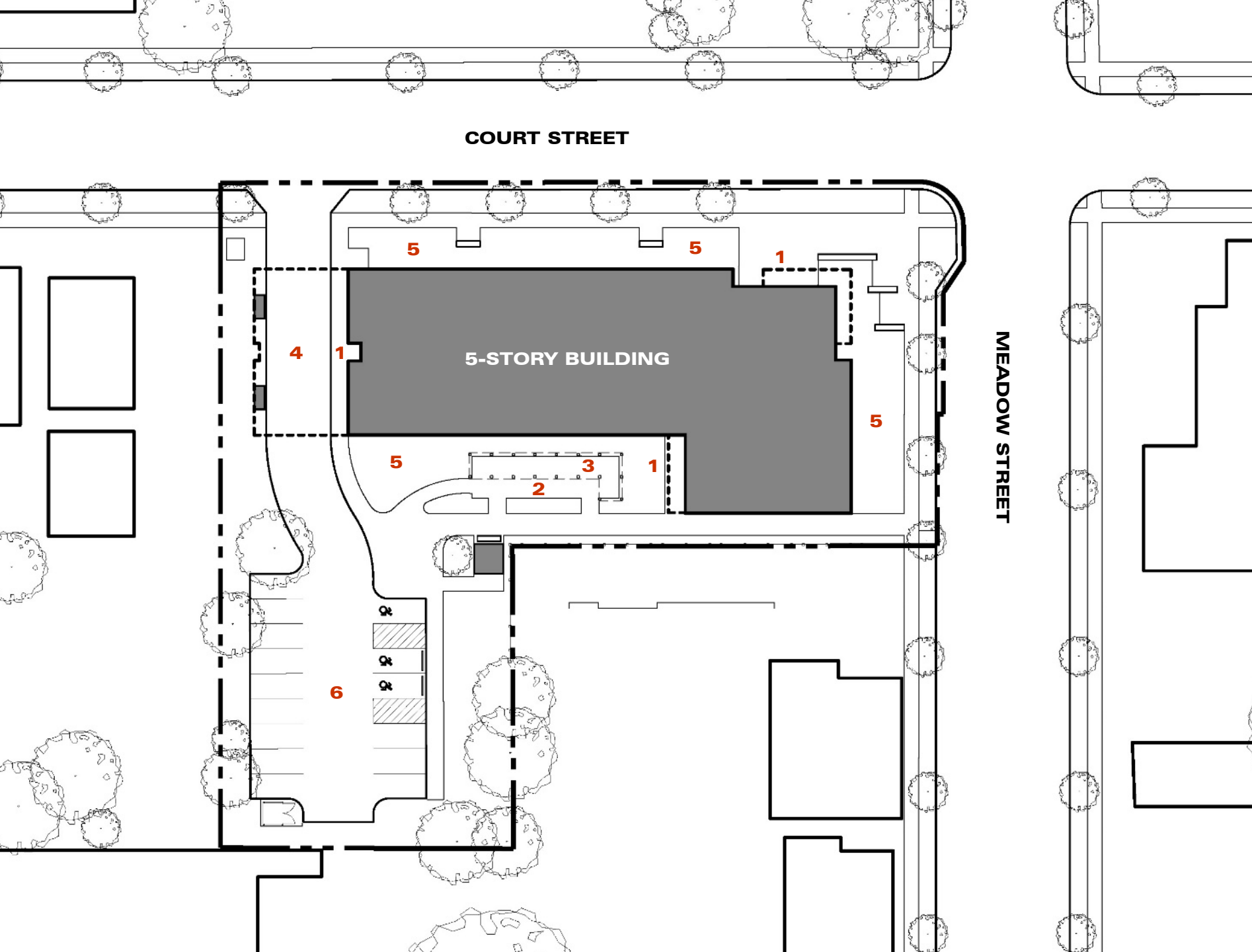
“Lakeview Health Services is dedicated to helping those we serve identify and achieve personally meaningful life goals and to realize their full potential. We provide safe, affordable housing and support to persons recovering from mental illness and health care coordination services to individuals with chronic mental and physical health challenges.”

Lakeview already had a presence in the Ithaca, NY region, but expressed interest in combining their local offices providing support services to individuals in need in the region. Their goals for this project were to:

- 1) Provide 60 units of quality, affordable housing to individuals with limited income, low/no income, homelessness and/or are recovering from serious mental illness, substance use disorders or HIV/AIDS.
- 2) Consolidate their local support services offices to serve the residents in the new building, as well as individuals in the community.
- 3) Develop a mixed-use building that is at once appropriately designed, in an existing established walkable neighborhood, and is within a reasonable budget to be funded through low-income housing tax credits.

AIA ROCHESTER 2023 DESIGN AWARDS
WEST END HEIGHTS
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
Ithaca, NY





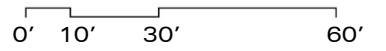
COURT STREET

MEADOW STREET

5-STORY BUILDING

SITE PLAN

- 1. BUILDING ENTRANCE
- 2. COURTYARD
- 3. PERGOLA
- 4. PORTE COCHERE
- 5. LANDSCAPED BEDS
- 6. PARKING

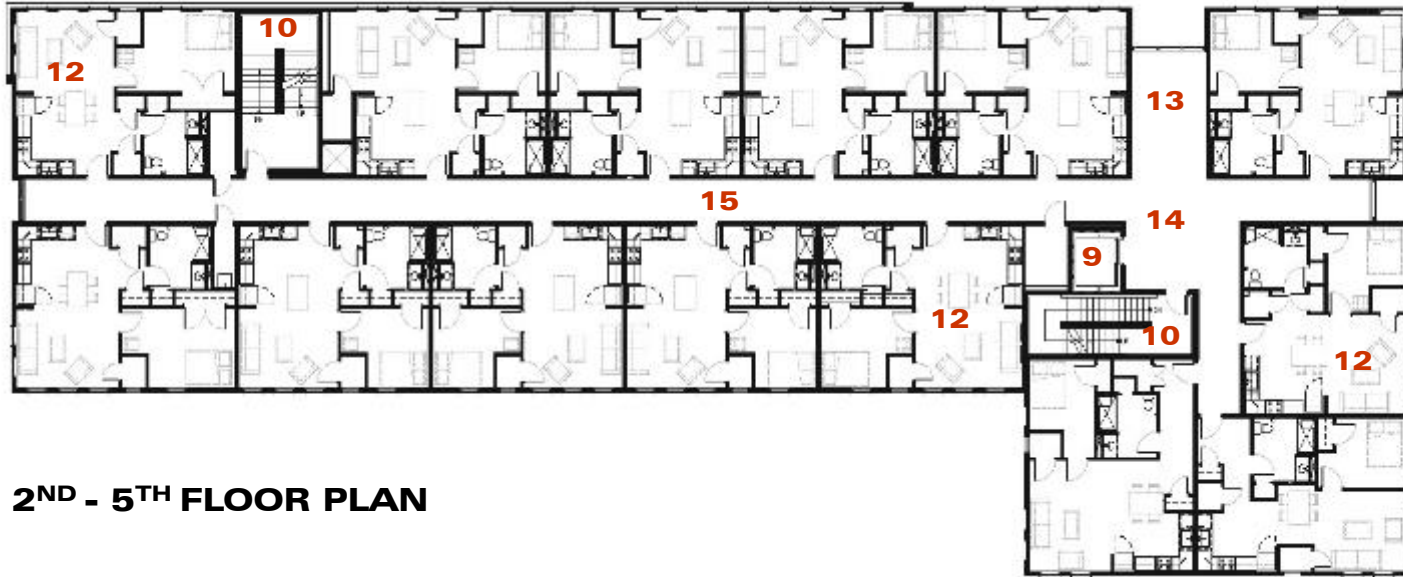




“In response to the need for safe, affordable housing, West End Heights serves a mixed population of individuals in an established, walkable neighborhood”



“The main entrance addresses the street with a terra cotta-hued tower. The cantilever provides shade and protection from the elements.”



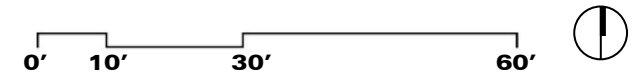
2ND - 5TH FLOOR PLAN



1ST FLOOR PLAN

FLOOR PLAN KEY

- 1. VESTIBULE
- 2. LOBBY
- 3. CONFERENCE ROOM
- 4. OFFICES
- 5. COMMUNITY ROOM & KITCHEN
- 6. STAFF BREAKROOM
- 7. LAUNDRY ROOM
- 8. TOILET ROOM
- 9. ELEVATOR
- 10. STAIR
- 11. MECHANICAL ROOM
- 12. TYPICAL APARTMENT
- 13. LOUNGE
- 14. UPPER LOBBY
- 15. CORRIDOR
- 16. PORTE COCHERE







ME AVE

ONE WAY





“The building wraps a south-facing courtyard strategically placed to connect with the light-filled Community Room.”





RECEPTION OFFICE

EXIT



“The circulation is straightforward. Corridors run east-west and terminate at large windows. Natural light permeates the interior and views are provided to the hills beyond.”



“High ceilings and open plans enhance comfort and spaciousness for the modestly-sized apartments”





“The porte-cochere provides access to parking while maximizing the number of apartments on the small urban site.”



W COURT ST

ONE WAY