



Maine Real Estate &
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

MEREDA Celebrates Real Estate Development in Maine by recognizing its 2023 Notable Project Recipients.

University of Southern Maine Portland Commons Residence Hall and McGoldrick Center for Career & Student Success, Portland



Photos courtesy of Trent Bell Photography

This massive transformation of University of Southern Maine's (USM) Portland campus included two connected facilities – the 218,000-square-foot, eight-story Portland Commons student residence and the 42,000-square-foot, five-story McGoldrick Center for Career & Student Success – both centered on a one-acre green quad.

The Portland Commons Residence Hall is home to undergraduates in their second, third, or fourth year; graduate students; law students; and residential staff with a mix of single-occupancy rooms, studio apartments, and larger apartments with multiple bedrooms and bathrooms. Amenities include a courtyard, a variety of study and meeting rooms, interior gathering spaces, and indoor bike storage.

The building has four wings, two reaching five stories in height and two reaching eight stories in height – forming a parallelogram that encloses the semi-private residential courtyard and maximizes access to natural daylight and views for living units.

This first-ever, on-campus, Portland-based residence hall for USM will provide affordable housing in a market where inventory is low and expensive, reduce competition for scarce housing with Portland residents, and alleviate overcrowding in the Gorham Campus residence halls.

The McGoldrick Center for Career & Student Success is a welcoming center of student life. The large scale of the building begins with the soaring south-facing Bath Savings Portico comprised of diagonal cross-laminated timber (CLT) columns to create a signature visual expression across the front façade. A broad gesture roughly 30 feet tall, 20 feet deep, and 200 feet long, the portico forms a “front porch” and covers a two-story mass timber-framed lobby. Enclosed entirely in a transparent curtain wall, this dramatic lobby is anchored by a monumental stone fireplace and soaring open stairs.

On the ground floor, the lobby is adjacent to a large dining common with a 254-seat capacity. The Double L Fireside Student Lounge, the University Store, and the Husky Brew provide more spaces to connect and study. The second floor is devoted entirely to career services, featuring the new home of the Career & Employment Hub with an office suite; a 4,500-square-foot multi-purpose room; private meeting rooms; and the Prentice Board Room. The top floor is devoted to Student Affairs, featuring the Student Diversity Center, with offices and various student lounge spaces.

These new campus facilities represent the pinnacle of sustainability and embrace renewable low-carbon building technologies, waste diversion, and strategies. Portland Commons is the second largest Passive House residence hall in the United States and is projected to use 50% less energy than a standard modern building. The McGoldrick Center, with its large-scale 33.3-kW rooftop photovoltaic array and passive solar heating, is pursuing LEED Gold certification.

The construction project is the largest in the school's history, involving more than 1,700 construction personnel working onsite. It was completed in the middle of an active downtown campus and with an impressive safety record.



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Maine Savings Amphitheater, Bangor Waterfront Concerts, LLC



Photos courtesy of Ben Getchell

Waterfront Concerts of Old Town Maine founded out of a garage in 2010 completed their long-standing vision of developing a best-in-class Amphitheater. The renovation makes Maine Savings Amphitheater the largest and most modern music venue North of Boston. With its completion, Bangor, Maine, in the summer, has solidified its position in the Northeast as a premier concert destination for world class talent and amazing community events for years to come. Additions include, ten corporate suites, five premium clubs, several ADA improvements, improved and expanded concessions, terraced Hussey Fusion seating with wider seats and isles, two hundred and fifty-two new bathrooms with attendants and dedicated video screens and audio system for the lawn. Their team began working with architects, contractors and suppliers in early 2019. Together they worked to upgrade every surface, every seat and every touch point for their consumers. They were incredibly careful to use Maine made products, contractors and environmentally sustainable materials in every aspect of the build where they could to maximize the impact of the build locally and to minimize its impact on the community and environment.



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Phoenix Flats, Portland Community Housing of Maine



Photos courtesy of CWS Architects

Phoenix Flats is a unique partnership between the City of Portland, MaineHousing, Portland Housing Authority, WNC, Bangor Savings Bank, and Community Housing of Maine, Inc. (CHOM) – made possible by a long-term land lease from the City, and an additional land donation from Donald Sussman.

Designed by CWS Architects, Thornton-Tomasetti, Bennet Engineering, Terradyn Consultants, and built by AlliedCook Construction, Phoenix Flats is Passive House Certified, and its design is the embodiment of all CHOM has learned about good design, energy efficiency, and thermal comfort. This development combines both affordable residential apartments and first-class commercial space into one building in downtown Portland. Beyond adding critical affordable housing, it is a blended Housing First development, discreetly housing people who are chronically homeless. What was once a city owned parking lot is now a beautiful building contributing to the social and economic goals of the City of Portland and the State of Maine.

Phoenix Flats is the first building in Maine to be constructed with the use of the newly created State Low Income Housing Tax Credit. This project invested in a downtown neighborhood and has positively impacted the community, fulfilling multiple public purposes: Increased affordable housing, community investment, creating critical permanent supportive housing to end long-term homelessness, and adding first-class commercial space. The \$16M investment in permanently affordable rental housing was Davis-Bacon compliant and created hundreds of well-paying jobs, bringing high-paying employment to industries devastated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This building also spawned the improvement of the intersection of Middle and Franklin to create safer pedestrian and vehicular passage.

This project came online at a critical time with the City of Portland experiencing a homelessness crisis. This project immediately leased up 22 people experiencing chronic homelessness, including people staying outside. Each person was housed directly from homelessness when the building opened, helping to alleviate capacity constraints in the homeless services system, and due to collaborative support from service providers including the City of Portland, producing immediate and long-term stability for the target population. The initial results mirror the success of other blended Housing First efforts by CHOM throughout the state. At the time of this publication, CHOM houses 220 people who came from chronic homelessness, with 78 of those people currently living in blended arrangements, and all of them in housing that adheres to Housing First principles as defined by HUD. CHOM's success rate for chronically homeless populations in housing is 94%. The development team also overcame rising construction costs, contaminated soil, COVID-19, significant supply-chain issues, and construction delays to bring this affordable rental housing into existence to permanently house some of the most vulnerable populations in Maine.



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Homeless Services Center, Portland Developers Collaborative



Photos courtesy of John Benford

The City of Portland's Homeless Services Center (the "HSC") is a newly constructed 52,000 SF single-story building located in Portland's Riverton neighborhood. The building serves as a low-barrier temporary emergency shelter for adults and comprises 208 beds between separate men's and women's dormitories, a commercial kitchen and dining area, bathrooms with private showers, offices for service providers, an on-site health clinic run by Greater Portland Health, and an outdoor recreation area with community planting beds for growing flowers and fresh vegetables.

The HSC is Maine's largest homeless shelter and is unparalleled in its provision of dignified living spaces and on-site wraparound support services. While the vast majority of Maine's homeless shelters are small, existing spaces that have been repurposed with varying degrees of success, the Portland HSC was thoughtfully designed and constructed specifically to serve the unhoused based on input from those experiencing homelessness. It is a space where guests can feel welcomed and safe. Wrap-around services and spaces designed with dignity and compassion support guests' feelings of self-worth and motivation toward recovery and stable, long-term housing. That the facility was at capacity on day one and has since expanded by 50 additional beds underscores the shelter's impact on the Portland area and surrounding communities.

Though a result of many prior years of visioning and planning, the development of the HSC project began in earnest with City Council approval of the 654 Riverside Street site for the new shelter in 2019. In 2021, as a result of an RFP process, the City of Portland selected Developers Collaborative to develop the shelter and lease it back to the City. Winton Scott Architects designed the building and Cianbro served as construction manager. The project team broke ground in March 2022 and was substantially completed 12 months later in March 2023. The project cost was originally estimated at \$25M but came in about \$1M under budget.

The HSC utilized a pre-engineered Murox building system, concrete floors, and minimal finishes. The result is a LEED Gold-certified building that is durable, functional, comfortable, and humane. The well-insulated building envelope has passive-house-level fixed windows and the building's energy model shows a 30% improvement over ASHRAE 2019 standards. HSC operations are free of fossil fuels, powered instead by a 107.8 kW PV solar array installed on the building's roof. Heating, cooling, and hot water are entirely electric, and a highly efficient variable refrigerant flow system focuses conditioned air in different areas as guests move throughout the building during the day. The design of the building maximizes natural light, and additional lighting is moderated by occupancy sensors.



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Northeastland Hotel, Presque Isle Haley Ward, Inc.



Photos courtesy of Haley Ward, Inc.

Ignite PI, a distinguished nonprofit organization committed to fostering collaboration and revitalization in Presque Isle, embarked on a transformative project aimed at reimagining the Northeastland Hotel as a dynamic hub for innovation and economic growth. Haley Ward, serving as the Lead Designer and Architect of Record, played a pivotal role in this endeavor, collaborating with Bowerbird Design Collective as the Interior Designer and Nickerson & O'Day, Inc. as the Construction Manager. The completion of Phase I in March 2023 marked a significant milestone, focusing on the renovation of over 8,900 square feet of space within the hotel.

This project is noteworthy for its groundbreaking approach to community development, where Ignite PI, a nonprofit entity, partnered with the private sector to drive economic growth and create new opportunities in Presque Isle. The repurposed Northeastland Hotel stands as a symbol of innovation, housing a co-working Innovation Center and revitalized common areas, including the restaurant, lobby, and staff rooms. This multifaceted approach not only modernizes the hotel but also transforms it into a vibrant space that fosters collaboration, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.

With a substantial investment exceeding \$6 million, Ignite PI's vision for the Northeastland Hotel extended beyond a mere renovation. The project created 51 new jobs, injecting vitality into the local economy and generating \$1.46 million in new wage growth. The construction process itself was a community-driven effort, utilizing over 14,500 people-hours, engaging more than 50 vendors, including subcontractors and suppliers, and employing over 100 different tradespeople. Over 70% of the team were located within 50 miles of the project site, contributing to the local workforce, and reinforcing the project's impact on the community.

Navigating the challenges of renovating a century-old building presented a unique set of obstacles for Haley Ward and its partners. From addressing compliance issues to overcoming structural complexities, the team showcased resilience and creativity. The incorporation of innovative solutions, such as integrating ramps for multiple elevations and creatively managing fire ratings between floors, reflected the commitment to preserving the historical gem while adapting it for modern, versatile use. Uncovering asbestos and securing an unstable brick wall further demonstrated the project's complexity, met with resourceful problem-solving solutions like utilizing metal studs and spray foam.

Today, the Northeastland Hotel stands not only as a beautifully renovated space but as a symbol of Presque Isle's resilience, adaptability, and commitment to fostering innovation in the heart of The County. The co-working Innovation Center, job creation, and economic impact underscore the project's broader significance, highlighting how a collaborative, forward-thinking approach can transform a community and its historical landmarks.



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Johnson Hall Opera House, Gardiner Johnson Hall Redevelopment, LLC



Photos courtesy of Mercedes Arnold

As Maine's oldest Opera Theater, the three-story brick Italianate building is a significant feature of Gardiner's Historic District with a fascinating history spanning over 150 years. From its original construction in 1864 as a livery stable to a retail space with storefronts in 1884, to the 1888 Opera House renovation that included an elaborate redecorating scheme, to the 1930 movie theater renovation and post fire movie theater redecoration in 1932, and alterations and partial demolition in the later 20th century. Each successive alteration removed some old and added new decorative finishes and building elements. This has resulted in a buildup of partial layers of architectural elements and decorative finishes, each representing a significant point in the history and use of the theater at Johnson Hall.

The project scope included 13,500 SF of exterior and interior renovations to all three floors with an installation of a new balcony. It was constructed in conformance with historic standards as set forth by the National Park Service, Maine Historical Preservation Commission standards and Gardiner Historical Society requirements.

The project was delayed two years due to funding challenges and escalating construction costs during COVID. At the same time there was a completion deadline to obtain historical tax credits funding a sizable portion of the project. To meet these challenges, a permit was obtained to perform demolition while waiting for National Park Service approvals and critical materials and equipment subjective to inflation and availability were purchased.

Today the building features a 400- seat theater with state-of-the-art sound, lighting and projection equipment; a gracious lobby and concession area, restrooms, and a green room for performers on the second floor; an expanded foyer and full-service box office on the ground floor; a renovated 100-seat theater on the lower level; and ADA compliant access throughout all floors with ramps, an elevator and a stage lift.

During pre-construction and construction, over thirty-seven consultants and businesses combined were engaged in the project. This created employment opportunities, generated revenue, and created a ripple effect in other sectors.

Johnson Hall Opera House will promote, create, and inspire artistic excellence through the presentation of world class entertainment and professional performing arts education to the Kennebec Valley region and surrounding areas. The renovation allows the organization to expand its current educational programs and build upon SPARK and Artists in the Schools. Johnson Hall Opera House is now an anchor to the stressed downtown hospitality businesses and an engine of economic opportunity for the Kennebec Valley region.

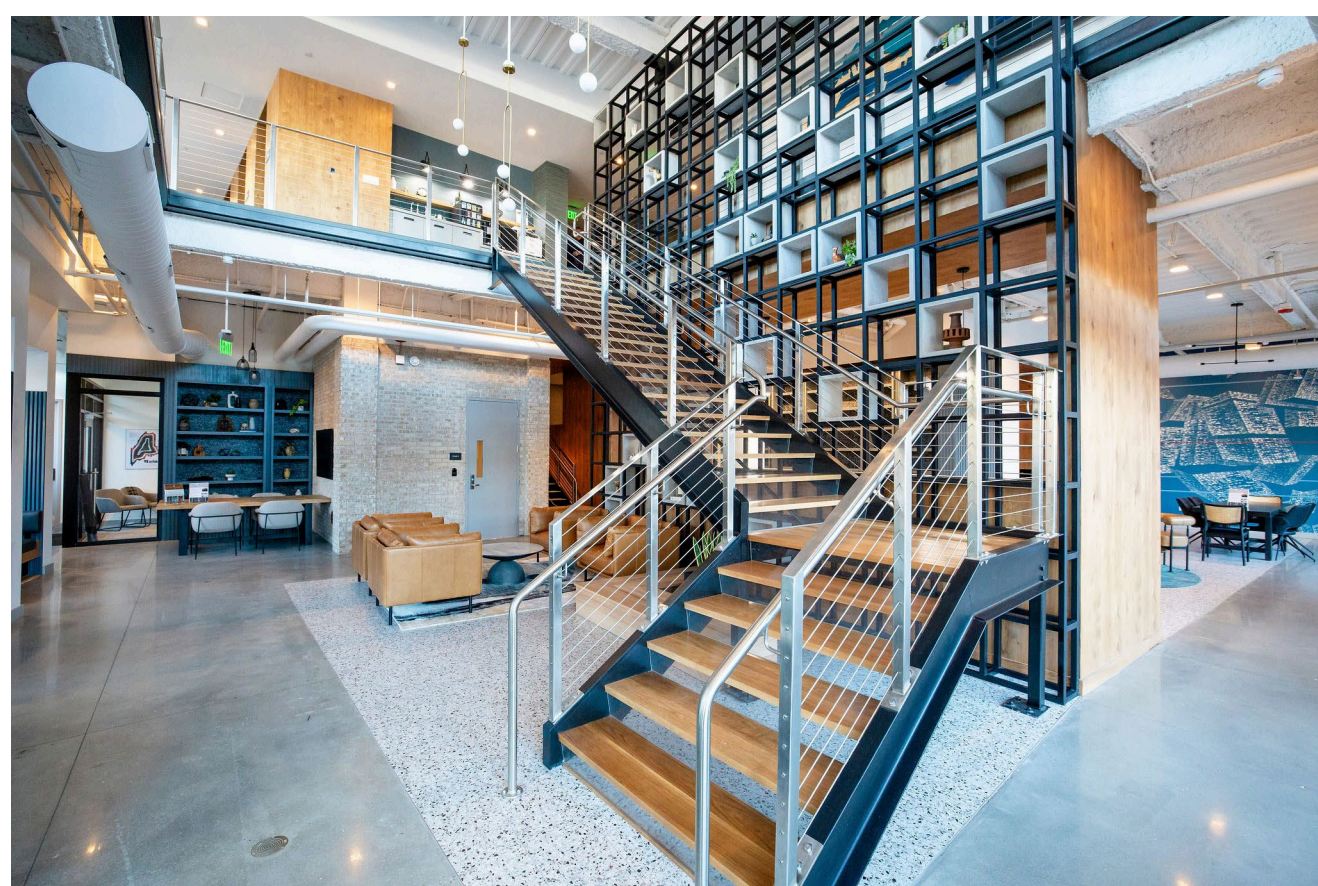


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The Armature at Hanover Works, Portland Reveler Development



*Photo courtesy of Reveler Development,
Photography by Hitched Willie*



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Photo courtesy of Reveler Development

The Armature is Portland's first and only lifestyle apartment complex. The mixed-use property opened for occupancy in November 2023 and is located in Portland's rapidly emerging West Bayside neighborhood, featuring 171 residential units (10% of which is workforce housing) with integrated parking and 6,400 SF of commercial space. The Armature provides much-needed housing while transforming the building's ground floor into a retail and dining hub within West Bayside.

The Armature represents Reveler's largest residential development project to date. The site was the final property of six former public works buildings sold by the City for redevelopment through a competitive RFP process. Following a successful bid, Reveler purchased the site in 2017. Once a mechanical garage and surface parking lot for Portland's fleet of public works vehicles, this industrial history inspired The Armature's name and branding. A ground-up construction project, The Armature required an intensive construction timeline and was made possible by a collaborative effort with its project partners, including Penobscot General Contractors, Acorn Engineering, and Reveler's in-house construction team.

Designed by Boston-based architecture firm Cube3, The Armature emphasizes quality, refined finishes and amenities that match modern tastes and drive renter demand. Developed to serve a growing demand for housing, The Armature differentiates itself through a focus on creating a true live-work-play community that matches modern tastes and evolving needs. The Armature was also designed to complement the existing neighborhood and incorporate visual diversity, combining contemporary and traditional architectural elements and maintaining a "step-down" approach to blend within the neighborhood's current landscape. The building's wide selection of onsite amenities — from a podcast recording room to a swimming pool and sky deck — are unique to the market and distinguish The Armature as a premier lifestyle community. Alongside these amenities, the residential units were also thoughtfully elevated, offering renters upgraded finishes, smart home build-ins, and spacious floor plans that include private balconies, oversized kitchen islands, and floor-to-ceiling windows.

On the ground floor, The Armature's four commercial spaces will connect with local businesses along 82 Hanover Street, forming Hanover Works. Commercial tenants in Hanover Works include Wilson County Barbecue, Argenta Brewing, and Bar Publica with two additional spaces under contract and two remaining available to lease. The development of Hanover Works also distinguishes The Armature, creating and fostering an indoor-outdoor neighborhood hub that provides residents with nearby goods and services, allows local businesses to connect with The Armature's 171-unit residential community, and was designed to serve the surrounding community for years to come.