

Original 1962 Irving Multifamily Housing Community Undergoes Major Structural and Aesthetic Makeover

Britain Way Marks First LEED Gold-Certified Multifamily Community in Irving



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The new Britain Way Apartment community is now one of Irving's shining stars. Offering contemporary one, two, and three bedroom residences in an eco-friendly environment. (PRNewsFoto/OM Housing)

IRVING, Texas, Jan. 18, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- The multi-million dollar Britain Way renovation project, overseen by a team of multifamily housing experts including Owner/Developer Deepak Sulakhe, President/CEO of OM Housing, BGO Architects, Fore Property Company Management and CANV Construction, has changed the face of this Irving neighborhood by creating a safer, healthier and a more vibrant community.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20130118/LA45062>)

Currently, the only affordable LEED Gold-Certified multifamily community in Irving, Britain Way has been transformed from its previous appearance to a new, fresh look. Built in 1962, the original development had been noticeably deteriorating in recent years. It had no community center, clubhouse, swimming pool or resident lifestyle services. There were 17 monotonous buildings with dull colors and old mansard roofs in poor condition. There was poor on-site drainage and lighting, no perimeter fencing and only one bathroom in each two- and three-bedroom apartment. Several city code violations were recorded in recent years as well. The project team's mission was to convert this old community into a high quality, eco-friendly, modern and affordable housing community for the citizens of Irving.

"Prior to the design stage, we had numerous discussions with all the Project Consultants to identify the respective problem areas of this project. Once these problems areas were identified, design priorities were established based on need and the rehab dollars were allocated accordingly," said Owner/Developer Deepak Sulakhe of OM Housing. Of top focus on design, was the clean-up of existing environmental conditions, providing healthier living standards and increasing the quality of living at reduced costs to the residents. Due to the age of the facility, Asbestos and lead-based paint were present in the original 168 units before the remodeling began in January 2012. In addition to the abatement of the harmful substances, the project team designed the facility to meet LEED Gold Certification standards and added a number of notable features to enhance the sense of community and overall quality of life for Britain Way residents.

Developing eco-friendly communities and helping to keep the environment safe is something that OM Housing prides itself on. "While I personally believe in providing healthier living conditions and reducing the consumption of water

and energy, a reduction in the utility expenses to working class citizens goes a long way towards helping them save money for a college education or save towards the down payment of a home," added Deepak.

In addition to the Design Team, OM Housing engaged Fore Property Company and CANV Construction due to their vast experience in the Affordable Housing Industry as well as in LEED certified projects. This project is one of many Fore Property Company's projects bearing the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification. "If we can all strive to take care of our environment, no matter how small our efforts, I think we can really make a difference and plan for a better, healthier future," said Richard Fore of Fore Property Company. Britain Way is the first and only LEED Gold Certified affordable multifamily community in the city of Irving. To earn LEED certification, a project must satisfy all LEED prerequisites by earning a minimum 40 points on a 110-point LEED rating system scale. To obtain the gold certification, the Britain Way project had to earn more than 60 points. Because this project was originally built in 1962 and was in disrepair, obtaining gold certification status was a herculean effort. The LEED certification ensures the property will be healthier and safer for residents in addition to providing lower operating costs and conserving energy and water.

The project is the largest and most drastic of many efforts to enhance the Irving community and has been very well-received by City Council and residents alike.

"Citizens of Irving who have lived in the area for a long time drive to the remodeled community to applaud the renovation," said Fore Property Company Vice President of Property Management Peggy Walker. "Many have lived in Britain Way in the past or have had friends or relatives who lived there. Everyone is in awe and pleasantly surprised by the thorough makeover and the positive difference it has made to the community. The new property is practically selling itself."

Further enhancing the project's resident quality of life initiatives, the new, improved Britain Way will be designed to meet Irving Police's "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED) requirements. OM Housing visited with Irving Police early on in the design stage to achieve this status, ensuring residents are as safe as possible in their homes. Among several other items, the project was made safer by adding perimeter fencing and increasing lighting levels throughout the site.

The multi-million dollar rehabilitation project was completed ahead of schedule and is leasing up very strongly. Enhanced features include expanded kitchen areas with upgraded interior amenities and energy efficient appliances; visually pleasing facades, sloping roofs, heavy stone accents added to existing brick and lush landscaping; second bathrooms added to select two- and three-bedroom units; brand new spacious clubhouse and community center; and an on-site resident activities coordinator to lead an abundance of community services provided to residents at no extra cost. Strategic partnerships, such as with the local YMCA, other community based organizations, local volunteer groups and non-profits will be formed to provide lifestyle and learning activities such as play and learn activities for children, computer classes, adult education programs, lifestyle enrichment classes, nutrition classes and aquatic activities for children and adults.

Financing from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, in conjunction with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Dougherty Mortgage and PNC Real Estate, allowed for a very comprehensive and thorough rehabilitation. "Not only were aesthetic and physical needs addressed, but the rehab also cleaned up existing environmental conditions, provided safer and healthier living and instilled a strong sense of community while vastly enhancing the lifestyle of the residents," said Sulakhe.

The Greater Irving Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce, Irving Hispanic Chamber, and Deepak Sulakhe are hosting the Grand Opening of Britain Way Apartments Tuesday, January 22nd. The official ribbon cutting ceremony and LEED Gold Certification presentation will include remarks by the City of Irving's Honorable Mayor Beth Van Duyne.

About OM Housing

Founded in 2005, OM Housing, LLC (OMH) is a multifamily apartment development firm specializing in developing high quality, eco-friendly apartment communities. OMH has been responsible for developing over \$750 million in

multifamily projects totaling over 6,000 units. The OMH team has more than 75 years of combined experience in the multifamily industry making it well positioned to own, manage and operate all aspects of the real estate chain. For more information about OM Housing and their developments, please visit www.omhousing.com.

About Fore Property Co.

Fore Property Company (FORE) is a full-service, national real estate company with more than 30 years of experience in developing, constructing and managing communities. FORE has built 15,000 apartment units in over 70 communities in 14 states and 34 cities. For additional information about Fore Property Company and all of their communities visit www.foreproperty.com.