

**Affordable Properties**

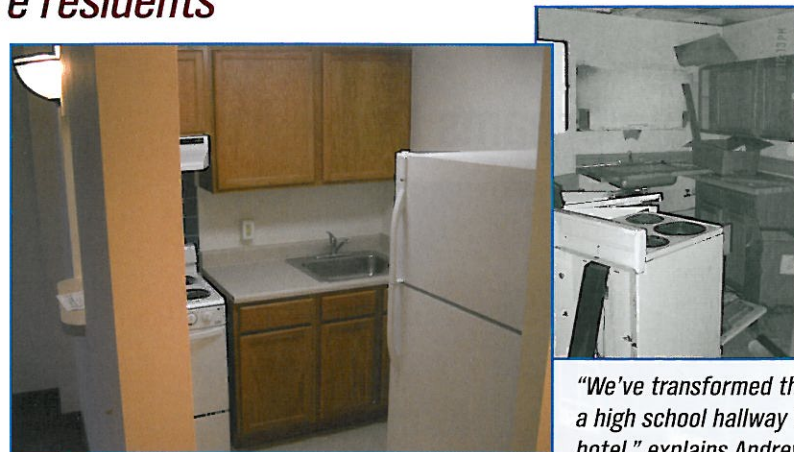
## The Transformation of MonteVerde - Preserving 301 affordable apartments for elderly and disabled Baltimore residents

Several years ago, MonteVerde (formerly called Greenhill Apartments) was a rundown Section 8 apartment complex featuring twin 13-story buildings that had not been updated since they were built in the 1970s. Exposed cinder block hallways, deteriorating kitchens and baths, and uniformed guards at the doors added to the dreary atmosphere.

After learning the owner was trying to sell the building, Greater Baltimore AHC (GBAHC) stepped in to preserve and extend the Section 8 housing contract for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities. "We wanted to turn bare bones housing into something we could really stand behind – a physical and social transformation that would provide a higher quality of life," explains Andrew Vincent, GBAHC Director.

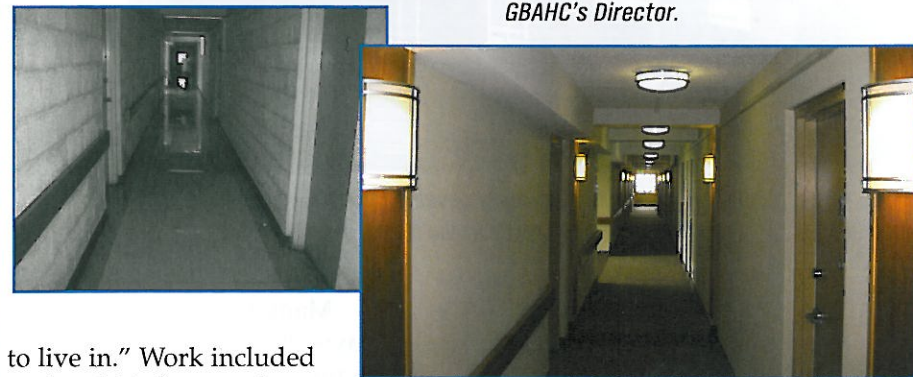
### Transforming a neglected building

The \$30 million renovation was designed to completely rejuvenate MonteVerde – to create a place "anyone would love their mother



**Before and after**

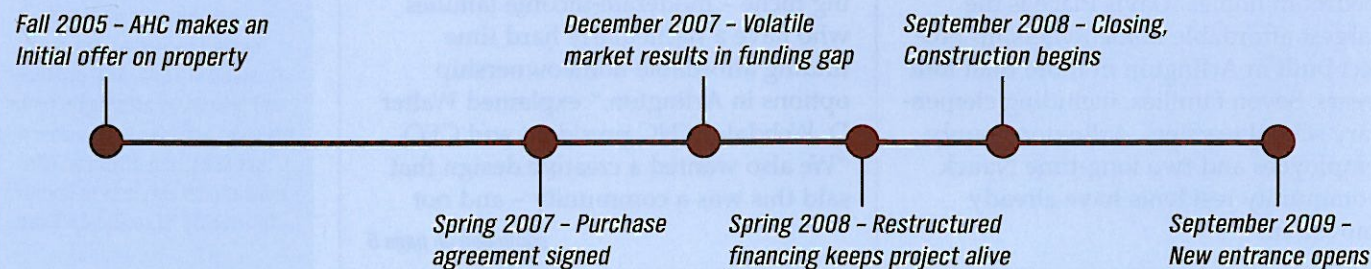
"We've transformed the corridors from a high school hallway to a high-end hotel," explains Andrew Vincent, GBAHC's Director.



to live in." Work included updated kitchens and baths, windows, new heating and cooling systems, enhanced elevators, and a new roof. New wall coverings, flooring and sconces now brighten every hallway, creating a more welcoming atmosphere. A newly constructed two-story entry links the two buildings and includes a new lobby, "living

room," and management offices. A new large multi-purpose room, with an exercise room and wellness center, was built next to the entrance. Other new community rooms, including an internet lounge, library, arts and crafts and game room, provide space for additional activities.

### MonteVerde Timeline - Many Steps to Success



The new entryway provides a more welcoming entrance as well as new community areas.

walk through the new doors. Othel Chase, a retired gentleman from Baltimore, is so pleased with the renovation, he has recommended MonteVerde to at least 10 friends. Three have already moved in. "It's a lovely place, and we are going to enjoy our lives here," says Mr. Chase.

### Overcoming financing challenges

The economic crash almost derailed the whole project. As the low-income housing tax credit market collapsed and public subsidies dried up, GBAHC ended up with a \$6.7 million financing gap.

Thanks to a combination of sources, GBAHC managed to bridge the shortage and close in September 2008. GBAHC's balance of creative solutions and hard work won the attention of the *Baltimore Business Journal*, which awarded MonteVerde the Runner Up for 2008 Financing Deal of the Year.

### Minimizing renovation stress

Once the financing was settled, construction started immediately. Most residents chose to stay in their units while they were being renovated,

but "moved out" for the day during carpeting, painting, etc. "Because we were working with an elderly and disabled population that generally doesn't adapt well to change, we created lots of ways to keep communication open and strategies to make transitions as easy as possible for everyone," explains Rosana Montequin, Vice President, Relocation and Development Services, AHC Management. Under close supervision by AHC's Construction Management Services professionals, the work proceeded quickly.

### Enjoying the transformation

Today, the buildings have been totally transformed and residents are delighted. When the new entryway opened, several long-time tenants woke up early to be the first to

### Award Winning Projects

The Gates of Ballston, a 464-unit community of low-rise, landscaped Colonial Revival-style buildings, has won a 2009 Historic Preservation Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Built in the late 1930s, the garden-style apartment complex had never been renovated. The



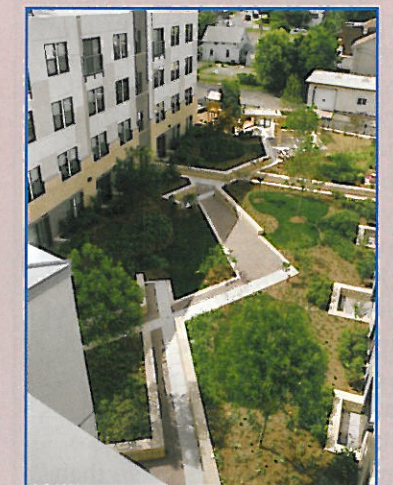
Gates of Ballston won a 2009 Historic Preservation Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

revitalization restored distinctive architectural details, as well as replaced kitchens and bathrooms, windows, appliances, heating and cooling systems and roofs.

Along with AHC Inc., co-recipients honored for the restoration are: Arlington County; Collins & Kronstadt, AIA; Traceries, Inc.; and Harkins Builders.

The Shelton, with 94 apartments, has won two separate American Institute of Architects/DC Chapter Design Awards – a Presidential Citation for Sustainable Design and an Architecture Merit Award.

Designed by Bonstra/Haresign ARCHITECTS, the building is a cornerstone of the Nauck neighborhood's revitalization plan. The U-shaped building encloses a landscaped courtyard and play



Bonstra/Haresign ARCHITECTS; Photography by Anice Horschlander

The Shelton received two American Institute of Architects/DC Chapter Design Awards.

area created by Landscape Architecture Bureau. Jurors noted that "The Shelton has the street presence and appearance of a good market-rate housing project, not inexpensive affordable housing."