

# JACK KEMP WORKFORCE HOUSING MODELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2012 FINALIST

## DEVELOPER

Better Housing Coalition

## MIXTURE OF HOUSING TYPES

Workforce units: 11

Market-rate units: 11

## AFFORDABILITY

\$760 to \$975

## DEVELOPMENT COSTS

\$3.5 million

## DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

Site Acquired: August 2008

Construction Started: April 2011

Completed: November 2011

## SUSTAINABILITY

Underground cistern

Permeable paving

Native drought-resistant plants

## WEBSITE

[www.betterhousingcoalition.org](http://www.betterhousingcoalition.org)



## Beckstoffer's Mill Loft Apartments Richmond, Virginia

The Beckstoffer's Mill Loft Apartments is a 22-unit adaptive use project that transforms a historic former lumber mill into high-quality, mixed-income apartments. The property—developed by the nonprofit community development corporation Better Housing Coalition (BHC)—is located in the historic neighborhood of Church Hill in Richmond, Virginia. The nonconforming mill building is situated at the center of a residential neighborhood that has experienced a steady decline for over 50 years, mostly attributable to absentee landlords. In the past decade, public and private organizations have showed renewed interest and commitment to revitalizing the neighborhood, and BHC has been a pioneer and major contributor to this effort.

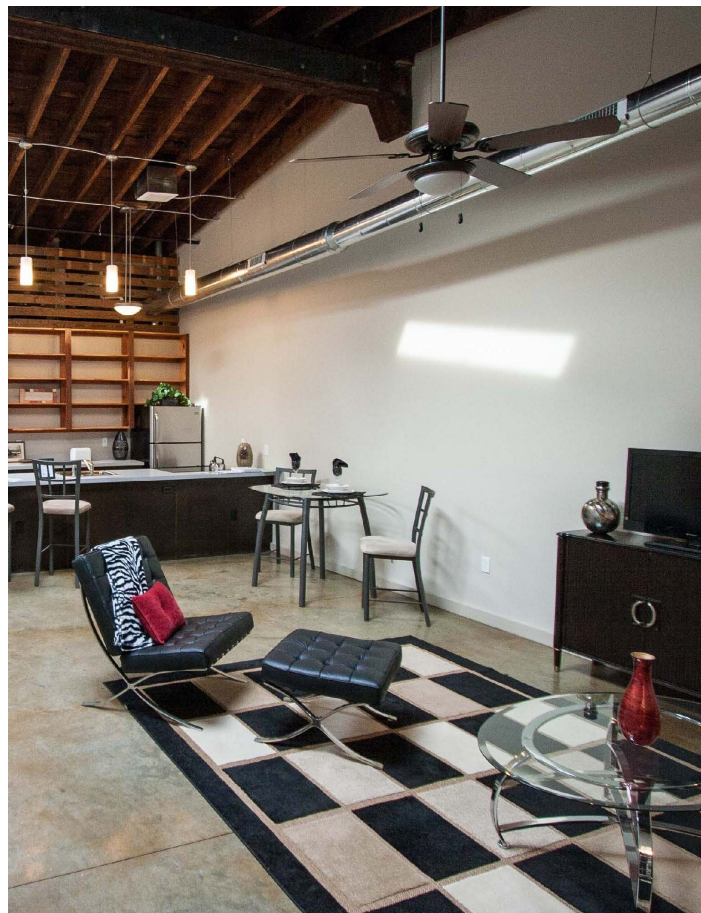
Beckstoffer's Mill was established by Henry Beckstoffer in 1897 as a sophisticated custom woodwork lumber mill in Church Hill. Operating for three generations, the company produced woodwork for a number of local clients, including the University of Richmond, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Governor's Mansion. After the company shut down, the property was vacated and eventually became blighted, until the BHC acquired the building in 2008. BHC—which has as its mission changing lives and transforming communities through high-quality, affordable housing—saw the mill building as an opportunity to create safe and healthy workforce housing in an area that was in need of revitalization.

Beckstoffer's Mill Loft Apartments consist of energy-efficient loft and garden-style apartments. Due to the building's historic character, the exterior facade was preserved and remains unchanged; however, the

interior now houses 11 workforce units and 11 market-rate units. BHC was awarded low-interest permanent financing from the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) requiring the developer to set income restrictions for 50 percent of the units. Therefore, 30 percent of the units are reserved for households earning 80 percent or less of the area median income (AMI) and 20 percent are reserved for households earning 120 percent or less of AMI. In addition to the permanent financing received from the VHDA, BHC offset project costs with grants from a variety of local foundations, stimulus funds from the city of Richmond, and historic tax credit equity purchased by Capital One.

Each apartment has a unique floor plan and feature design elements such as 12-foot ceilings, polished concrete floors, exposed brick, and skylights. The property is located three blocks from a city bus line and is less than five miles from the center city, offering residents a short commute to major job centers. The development also includes noteworthy energy-efficient features, including cellulose blown insulation, a tight building envelope, and energy-efficient heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems. Adhering to EarthCraft™ standards, the apartments are at least 15 percent more energy efficient than a typical home built to code. The developer also incorporates sustainable landscaping techniques, including an underground cistern to be used for irrigation, permeable pavement in parking areas to control stormwater runoff, and native drought-resistant plants.

Beckstoffer's Mill provided a unique opportunity to breathe life back into an otherwise underinvested neighborhood and has already served as a catalyst for additional improvements. Neighboring residents have joined the movement by making cosmetic enhancements to their homes. As an extension to the mill project, BHC will develop three more phases on the three-acre site—construction of 39 new apartments for low-income seniors, rehabilitation of three single-family homes, and construction of five additional low-income apartments.



**“Beckstoffer’s Mill Loft Apartments is part of a multi-phase development that will ultimately serve a broad range of incomes and housing tenures. It is serving as an economic catalyst to stimulate additional development and attract new investment in this transitional residential neighborhood.”**

**T.K. Somanath, President/CEO  
Better Housing Coalition**