



ULI WAVEMAKER AWARDS 2024: ROSEMONT

Baltimore, Maryland

Originally built in 1971, the Rosemont family townhouse complex was among several Baltimore City neighborhoods affected by disinvestment. This renovation of 106 townhomes and community recreation center was shaped by the owner and residents' desire for accessibility, a vibrant new aesthetic, and updated amenities. This project exemplifies how thoughtful design, community engagement, and resourceful solutions can breathe new life into a neighborhood.

Completion
January 2024

Project Team
Moseley Architects, Architect; Telesis, Developer; Southway Builders, General Contractor, Flaura Teeter, Landscape Architecture; Skarda & Associates, Structural Engineer; KCW Engineering Technologies, Civil Engineer; Bowley Jones, MEP Engineering

Application Contact
Martina Reilly, AIA, NCARB
Moseley Architects
1414 Key Highway
Baltimore, MD 21230
(410) 539-4300
mreilly@moseleyarchitects.com



Completeness

The Rosemont renovation presents a compelling case for a financially viable model of community transformation. The project addressed resident concerns about aesthetics and functionality through a cohesive and innovative design. Importantly, the project prioritized resident input, potentially leading to higher occupancy rates and a more stable income stream. Upgraded amenities and energy-efficient features can further contribute to financial viability.

The Rosemont renovation’s success hinges on its resident-centric approach. By involving residents in the design process, the project fosters a sense of ownership and community pride. Furthermore, the focus on accessibility, safety, and sustainability creates a more equitable and healthy living environment. This transformation has the potential to attract new residents and improve the economic prospects of the neighborhood.



TOP Aerial view of the newly renovated Rosemont Community; BOTTOM Existing Aerial view of existing townhomes.



ABOVE (COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) Aerial view of the renovated townhouses in context with the neighborhood. Lighter colors complement the existing urban palette. Walls at the front entry were opened up to create a new porch to increase visual and physical accessibility to the front door.; Renovated multipurpose sport court with local art work; Community Center and new playground

A Sense of Place and Quality

Nestled in Gwynns Falls Park neighborhood, Rosemont honors its location by prioritizing the well-being of its residents. Upgraded landscaping and open building entrances create a stronger connection to surrounding nature, a hallmark of the Gwynns Falls area. Biophilic design principles are woven throughout, with organic forms in the playground and natural materials and colors used extensively. This focus on nature is further emphasized by the interior color scheme of the recreation center, which echoes an existing mural, subtly integrating local artistic expression. A new playground and sport court not only encourage exercise but also foster social interaction, creating a vibrant atmosphere and a strong sense of community.

Notably, Rosemont’s commitment to excellence extends beyond aesthetics. Improved sidewalks enhance walkability and accessibility, demonstrating a high standard in both design and functionality. This focus on quality encompasses all aspects of the project, from construction methods and economic considerations to marketing strategies and ongoing management practices designed to create a thriving community. Ultimately, Rosemont serves as a model for future projects, demonstrating how investment can foster a strong sense of place and become a cornerstone of the surrounding community.



Sustainability

Rosemont’s transformation exemplifies sustainable revitalization. Located in the Gwynns Falls Park Neighborhood, a designated redevelopment area, the project prioritizes using existing infrastructure, reducing environmental impact and breathing new life into the community. Sustainability is woven throughout. The project achieved NGBS Silver certification with features like Energy Star appliances, LED lighting, and upgraded HVAC systems. The focus on resident health is evident with the removal of mold, pests, and hazardous materials, along with improved ventilation and energy-efficient appliances ensuring a healthy living environment.

Improved sidewalks promote walkability, and the location boasts a Walk Score of 69, a Good Transit Access Score of 63, and a Bike Score of 46. Residents can easily access Poplar Grove Street’s bus routes and the Marc Penn-Washington Rail station within a mile. Active play and recreation areas were integrated throughout the site, including a new playground designed to accommodate a variety of ages and abilities. Despite the hillside location, the design team created an accessible route connecting residents to the new community center, ensuring everyone can enjoy the amenities.



ABOVE TOP Townhouses frame the view to the renovated Recreation Center. A new accessible route was integrated into the community to access the Recreation Center amenities.; BOTTOM Existing units with brick entrance and vacant recreation center in the background



Visionary and Emulation

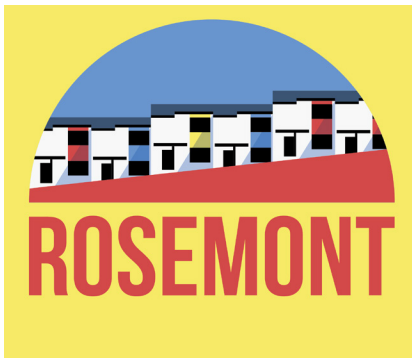
Rosemont transcends the typical renovation project. It’s a vibrant experiment in community design, pushing the boundaries of revitalization and setting a new standard for others to follow. The project steps away from the existing bland, repetitive townhouse aesthetic. Each unit becomes a colorful note in a cohesive Piet Mondrian-inspired melody. This ensures a sense of belonging while fostering individuality – a concept residents themselves championed.

But Rosemont’s vision extends beyond aesthetics. Scattered throughout the site are unique activity areas – a playground, landscaped gardens, and recreation zones – each encouraging exploration and fostering a sense of discovery. This resident-centric approach ensures the design fosters human connection and a vibrant community spirit.

Future plans for post-occupancy evaluations solidify the project as a living laboratory. Lessons learned will be shared through publications and lectures, influencing future projects. This dedication to continuous learning ensures Rosemont’s brilliance keeps inspiring for years to come, establishing it as a model for future endeavors.



TOP Pops of color were composed around the site to give each house its own identity but still worked within a cohesive community palette that brought the neighborhood together. BOTTOM Existing exterior view of units



ABOVE (COUNTER CLOCKWISE) Unit entrances with new white brick coating and pops of color. New unit porches amplify activity along the street edge.; Rosemont logo created by Zerflin to highlight the colors used on site and the architectural signature for the project.; Information from community engagement meetings was directly integrated into the site design, primary entrance, covered balcony, and retail entrances

A Need

Rosemont prioritizes the unique needs of the neighborhood and its residents. Decades of wear and tear left the Rosemont neighborhood with a vacancy rate exceeding 40 percent. Boarded-up units stood as a stark reminder of its decline. This revitalization prioritized uplifting the community with a renovation that would increase safety, support social equity, and improve the day-to-day lives of the residents.

The transformation began with a commitment to resident input. The residents did not like the dark, drab, and monotonous exterior of the existing buildings. They wanted unity across the community, but also desired something to differentiate one house from another. Drawing inspiration from Piet Mondrian, the design team created a cohesive aesthetic that fostered individuality. Using a white acrylic masonry waterproofing coating over the existing brown brick and replacing the beige stucco panels with painted fiber cement panels, the design team composed a scheme across the site to balance a palette of seven different colors in gradients of blue and orange. Black accents on the windows, trim, and other linear elements echoes Mondrian’s bold lines, visually uniting the community.

The once-abandoned recreation center became the heart of the neighborhood, offering new leasing offices, a common laundry room and lounge, a gym, and ADA accessible restrooms. A new elevator was also added to the recreation center, allowing access to people of all abilities. Six units were also meticulously converted to meet UFAS accessibility standards, ensuring inclusivity for all residents.

The redesign of the townhouse entries also showcases an innovative design solution to a resident need. The existing townhouses had a brick wall with a thin slot on one side which created a small vestibule into the house, making it extremely hard for residents to move in furniture and blocked views from their doors to the street. The design team removed a portion of this wall and used steel to reinforce the floor above, opening the entry to gain visual and special access to the sidewalk. These innovative design solutions not only improved accessibility but also created a modern aesthetic.