Affordable Veterans Housing
UrbanWorks, Ltd.
Location: Melrose Park, Illinois
Client: A Safe Haven and West Suburban Housing Development Corp.
General Contractor: Skender Construction
Structural Engineer: Baldridge & Associates
Civil Engineer: Groundwork
MEP Engineer: Dynaaccept Engineering, Ltd.
Landscape Architect: Accent Urban Design

These 35 residences serve military veterans and their families in 12 buildings on five nearby, but separate, sites. Designed as infill, the structures respect the density of their suburban neighborhood, with overall volume and height complementary to the existing housing stock. Thoughtful design solutions achieved the $125 per square foot budget. Dual forms provide the theme for the overall composition of the house — balancing defined and undefined spaces, visible and hidden security. Abundant daylight is found throughout the units. First-floor residential units and the management office serve residents with mobility impairments, and 2.9 percent units accommodate sensory impairments. All units score above 50 for 100 percent Universal Design. The two flats feature exterior custom benches and flower boxes. A public hot lot, adjacent to the administration offices, encourages multi-generational interactions. Jurors were impressed with the design’s response to programmatic needs: “It’s refreshing; nice, put together, smart and composed,” one said.

Green building initiatives include sustainable planning, landscaping, construction materials and integrated energy conservation principles. The project meets the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code and achieved the Emerald Certificate through the National Green Building Standard green building program.

Lakeview Pantry
Wheeler Kearns Architects
Location: Chicago, Illinois
Client: Lakeview Pantry
General Contractor: Friedler Construction
Structural Engineer: Enspect Engineering
MEP Engineer: Building Engineering Systems (BES)
Lighting Designer: Lux Populi
Graphic Design: JNL Graphic Design
Owner Representative: IFF Real Estate Services

Wheeler Kearns has transformed a dilapidated pet day care into the first permanent home for Lakeview Pantry. Prominently located adjacent to the Sheridan “L” Station, the renovated building sought to create a space that provides dignity to those in time of need, furthers the Pantry’s mission and raises awareness about hunger and poverty in Chicago. The project uses materials in imaginative ways to create a simple, welcoming and safe environment.

Jurors loved the graphic design element of the project. “They are very direct but clever and well-done,” one juror said. “Those large, colorful graphics and signage help communicate functionality and locations of foods in both verbal and nonverbal ways, making it easier for those with low-literacy to understand how to navigate the space, while adding some levity to what is a serious and sometimes overwhelming experience.”

Jurors were also very taken with the project’s restored façade with large windows. “This whole project, the façade included, is about the life of the building as well as the program, and the architects have created a nice balance of each,” one juror said.