



**NORTHTOWN LIBRARY AND APARTMENTS
PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET**

Project: Northtown Apartments & Library, 6800 North Western
Ward / Ald. / CA: 50th Ward / Alderman Debra Silverstein / West Ridge Community Area
Owner / Developer: Northtown Apartments LP / EREG Development, LLC
Architect: Perkins & Will **General Contractor:** Powers & Sons
Investor: CREA **Lender:** CIBC & IHDA
Property Manager: Evergreen Real Estate Services, L.L.C.
Construction Start: January 2018
Date: February 4, 2019
Project Narrative: New construction of a mixed-use development with an approximately 16,000 square foot library on the first floor and 44 senior units on the three floors above. Thirty (30) units will be "RAD" units and residents will come from CHA wait lists; and fourteen (14) units will come from an Evergreen Real Estate Group maintained site-based wait list.

	CHA/RAD	Affordable	Total	%
1-BR	30	14	44	100%

The library includes an early learning area for children, a YOUmedia digital lab for teens, and community meeting and study rooms.

Financing:

Sources:

\$ 10,900,000	CHA Loan
\$ 1,200,000	First Mortgage – CIBC
\$ 15,209,577	LIHTC Equity
\$ 1,007,944	IAHTC Equity
\$ 3,000,000	IHDA Home Funds
\$ 2,960,000	Seller Note
\$ 576,402	Deferred Developer Fee/ Special Limited Partner/GP Capital Contribution
\$ 130,074	ComEd EEP

Uses:

\$ 2,983,680	Acquisition
\$ 26,691,419	Construction
\$ 5,308,898	Soft Costs

Schedule:

Construction start:	January 2018
Library completion expected:	February 2019
Residential completion expected:	May 2019



Northtown Library and Apartments

Chicago, Illinois

An Intergenerational Community Hub

West Ridge is one of Chicago's most diverse neighborhoods in terms of income, ethnicity, race, religion and age. Residents enjoy a tapestry of cultures and ideas, but, as demographics change, many local seniors found fewer and fewer housing options they could afford.

Enter this innovative collocation project, one of three in Chicago and among the first in the nation, which combines the amenities of the local library with 44 affordable apartments for seniors to encourage life-long learning.

A colorful mural by a neighborhood artist adorns the lobby, anchoring the community at street level. Residents of the apartments enjoy generous daylight and views of the neighboring park, along with improved access to the library and public transportation.

Today, West Ridge residents of all ages live, learn, and socialize in this forward-thinking space serving as a model for collocated housing in other cities.

Client: Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Evergreen Development Company, Chicago Public Library

Size: 6,039 square meters

Completion Date: 2019

Sustainability: LEED for Homes

Awards:

Spaces, Places and Cities Category Finalist

2019 Fast Company World Changing Ideas Award

Unbuilt Civic Finalist

WAF, 2018

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Chicago Opens New Libraries and Affordable Housing Projects After Design Competition



JARED BREY MAY 28, 2019



Rendering of the Northtown library branch (Perkins + Will)

Perkins + Will is an eighty-year-old architecture firm with noteworthy designs across the world, including the 850-foot [Chase Tower in Chicago](#), where the firm is based. Its architects have designed university buildings in [Vancouver](#), [Beijing](#), and [Saudi Arabia](#), and museums in [São Paulo](#), [Shanghai](#), and [Washington, D.C.](#) In 2017, it had the [second-most revenue](#) of any firm in the United States.

Big shots, in other words.

This month, the firm is marking the completion of a new kind of project: A new neighborhood branch library co-located with affordable housing for seniors in Chicago. The project, called Northtown Branch, is one of three new co-located library/affordable housing projects in the city, commissioned through a design competition [announced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel](#) in 2016. It includes 44 apartments: 30 of them will be rented to people on the Chicago Housing Authority waiting list and another 14 are reserved for people earning up to 60 percent of area median income.

Perkins + Will has “dabbled around the edges” of affordable housing projects, mostly with market-rate developments that require some reduced-rate units as part of an inclusionary housing policy, says managing principal Doug Smith. But Northtown was the first project the firm completed with a public housing authority.

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The winning firms were [selected](#) based on the responsiveness of their designs to the neighborhood context, sustainability elements, and building layout and landscape design. Smith says the firm tried to design the building so that it would transition between a commercial corridor on one side and a “traditional Chicago bungalow community environment” on the other. It also includes large windows and views of nearby Warren Park because, Smith says, “We wanted to make sure that when you’re occupying these spaces you’re experiencing the outdoor daylight.”

As Chicago Housing Authority CEO Gene Jones put it, “Northtown Library is the most unique and the most dynamic, architecturally, that I’ve seen in this city in a while. It should win many awards.”

The idea of combining public libraries with affordable-housing projects is starting to catch on, if only very slowly. Building housing alongside community amenities like public libraries give new residents an immediate connection to the neighborhood. The new co-located libraries will have services to support early literacy, tools for digital design and music recording, and workforce development support.

In February, the Brooklyn Public Library [broke ground](#) on a new branch that will be combined with 49 units of “deeply affordable” housing units, reserved for residents earning 30-80 percent of median income, with the majority earmarked for people earning less than 50 percent of median income. (Next City contributor Jen Kinney [wrote about the project](#) in 2016.) Last fall, San Francisco Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer floated the idea of building new housing at the city’s typically low-density neighborhood library branches, [as Next City reported](#).

“There are some cities that have done library and housing projects around the country, but combining them in just the way that the Chicago Housing Authority and the library and the City of Chicago did is fairly novel,” says David Block, director of development at Evergreen Real Estate Group, which was selected to develop two of the three projects in Chicago, including Northtown.

The project required a potpourri of financing. According to [a press release](#) from the mayor’s office, CHA, the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, the Illinois Housing Development Authority and half a dozen private lenders all contributed to the project.

Even still, the budget was tight, Block says. And even though it was a public project designed by notable architects, he says it was still a challenge to find reasonably priced contractor.

“Everybody who works in construction [in Chicago] is fully employed or over-employed, so subcontractors can almost charge whatever they want,” he says.

After responding to a Request for Proposals, Evergreen was selected as the developer for two of the projects, because CHA “saw some management economies of scale” in having one developer carry out two projects, Block says. And while there were [early doubts](#) that the design competition would produce anything beyond renderings, the competition factor — and the support of the mayor and the local alderman — built momentum behind the project.

“The fact that it was a design competition made it exciting, but it also made it challenging,” Block says. “We never questioned whether the original design was the right thing, we just said, ‘OK, this is what we were given. Our challenge is to make it happen.’” Northtown is the third library/senior housing project to open: The other two libraries, including the other one built by Evergreen, [opened in January](#).

The timeline was tight, too, Block says. Hosting a competition is a good way to get top design firms involved and to create energy around a project like Northtown, but Block says mixed-use projects take more time than conventional ones, and the pressure was on from the start.

“You would be well served to allow a little extra time to do it,” Block says. “The biggest challenge we faced was not so much the original terms of the competition, but trying to do it so quickly.”

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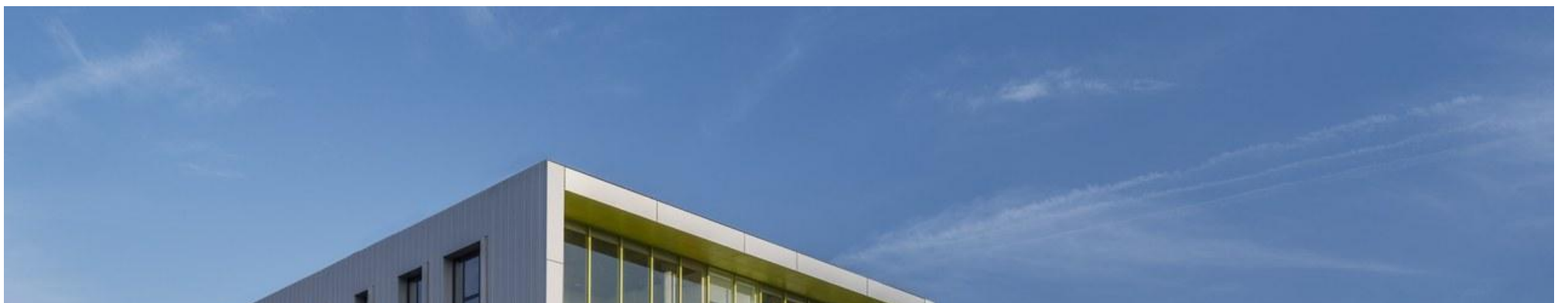
Chicago Real Estate

Perkins + Will Completes Northtown Library and Affordable Housing Complex in Chicago

The project is the result of a 2016 architectural contest, of which Perkins + Will was one of three winners

By Rebecca Holland

June 6, 2019



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brought in 32 submissions from local architects and ultimately three winners. The Independence Library and Apartments in Irving Park was designed by John Ronan Architects; the Little Italy Branch Library design came from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; and the Northtown Library, the latest of the three, was designed by [Perkins + Will](#).

“The Northtown Library is going to win all the awards,” jokes Jones. “I love the concept of the building. It fits in the community and brings a vibrant theme of transition, from a public perspective.”



The interior of the library. Photo: James Steinkamp

The concept of joining libraries and public affordable housing for seniors is an innovative model for the city, and one Jones says gives communities double the means and advantages in one space. Those who live in the housing have both affordable rent and easy access to the library, and residents in the community get an updated library with resources.

The four-story learning facility is a twisting building with green trim and floor-to-ceiling windows. The shared lobby features local artwork, and there's a teardrop-shaped garden.



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The housing side of the building offers modern, sunlit spaces, with direct access to the library's resources. Photo: James Steinkamp

“The garden cutout in the library creates a visual dialogue between the two components,” says Ralph Johnson, global design director at Perkins + Will. “It allows visitors to see the housing above. It helps to bring the outside in, adding to the uniqueness of the space.”



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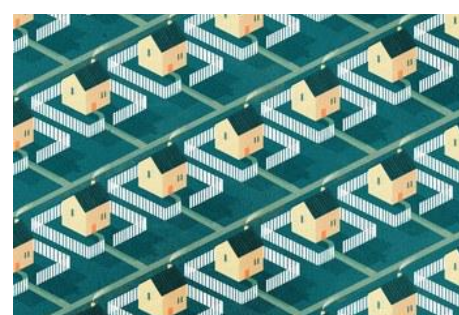


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