Historic Tax Credit Case Study: Park Towne Place
Presentation Outline

- Project Overview
- Site History and Design
- HTC Project Challenges
Project Overview

- West Tower
- North Tower
- East Tower
- South Tower
- The Great Lawn
- Towne Center
- Park Tower Place
- 23rd Street
- 24th Street
- Vine Street Expressway
Site History

Constructed between 1957-59
Site History: Urban Renewal

- Traces roots to Louis Kahn’s 1947 design for “Triangle District” (area bounded by Market, Ben Franklin Pkwy, Schuylkill)

- Important example of post-war urban renewal and planning in Philadelphia

- Urban renewal led by new generation of architects, planners, civic activists with goal to transform gloomy city
Site History: Ed Bacon

- Park Towne realized under city planner, Ed Bacon
- Bacon helped give Philadelphia a national reputation for urban planning
- Park Towne - first modern housing complex for middle and upper middle class residents in Philadelphia
Site History

- New type of residential development - Modern Apartment Tower
- Enclave of four 18-story apartment buildings with associated amenities on a formally landscaped site
Pittsburgh’s Mellon Square; pioneered rooftop gardens in 1950s
Design: Architect

- Designed by Chicago architect Milton M. Schwartz; significant figure in development of Post-WWII Chicago International style of architecture; inspired by Le Corbusier
- Reinforced concrete - economical and permitted speed of construction
- Schwartz invented form allowed for building crew to pour a floor a day
Site History

- Modern streamlined design – exterior and interior
- Designed with eye toward efficiency of space planning and construction

PARK TOWNE PLACE, Philadelphia, where quality partitions contribute to privacy and safety
Designation: National Register Listing

- Listed in the National Register
- Significant for association with community planning and development in mid-century Philadelphia
Pre-Rehab

Aerial View c. 2010
Pre-Rehab: Pool
Pre-Rehab: Towne Center
Pre-Rehab: Lounge
Pre-Rehab: Apartment
HTC Project Challenges

- Site
- Towne Center
- Building exteriors
- 1st floor public spaces: vestibules, lobbies, lounges
- Upper floor corridors
- Apartments
Site

- Site circulation, loop roads, walkways
- Fencing, concrete block walls
- Great lawn – atop 600-space underground parking
- Pool complex
- Signage
Concrete Block Walls

- Retention required
- Permitted to lower
Site

• Existing not original; not required to retain

• New signage required to be stylistically appropriate for site, minimal attachment to building
• Towne Center designed to house a restaurant and bar; evoked sense of a private club

• Lower level shopping arcade with grocery store

• Later façade removed; façade restored to more closely match historic appearance
Towne Center

- Floor replacement
- Storefronts
- Grocery store walls
Towne Center
Entrance Upgrades

Before

After
Hierarchy of Spaces:
1. 1st floor public spaces
2. Upper floor corridors
3. Apartments
Vestibules

- Limited opportunity for changes
- Retention of vestibules required
- Terrazzo floor replacement approved as condition justified replacement
Lobbies

- Limited opportunity for changes
- Retention of lobby space required
- In-Kind replacement of historic terrazzo floors approved
• Limited opportunity for changes
• Retention of lounges required
• Changes limited to furniture, art
• Limited opportunity for change

• Retention of corridor floor plan required

• Preservation of mid-century character required
Corridors
Corridor Doors

- Retention of mid-century aesthetic required
- Painting of doors approved
- Retention of original hardware required
Apartments

- More latitude for change
- Preservation of mid-century character required
- Upgrades to kitchens and baths permitted
• Upgrades to kitchens and baths permitted
Apartments
Keys to Success

- Qualified team
- Early identification of character-defining features
- Creative design team capable of working with historic constraints
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