

New Artist Housing Fitted with Green Roof

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Washington, D.C.—Volunteers are taking to the roof of Brookland Artist Lofts on Friday in Washington D.C. to make it into a green space. The volunteers, who will be managed by local nonprofit DC Greenworks, come from such organizations as Artspace, Hickok Cole Architects, Oculus, Dance Place, JDC Construction and other residents of the surrounding Brookland neighborhood.

The goal is to add sustainable features to the property’s roof. When completed, the 9,700-square-foot “Extensive Garden Roof Assembly” will consist of sedums and grasses that can withstand harsh growing conditions, installed over the building’s membrane roofing system. The assembly is designed for 28,500 plants.

“Green roofs on multifamily housing projects in our area are still lagging compared to the commercial sector, but they’re catching on,” Laurence Caudle, director of housing, associate principal, Hickok Cole Architects, tells *MHN*. Hickok Cole designed the property.

“Most of our projects have large mechanical farms on the roofs, or large amenity roof terraces that include swimming pools, which limits the usefulness of green roofs,” Caudle adds. “Our podium products—that is, stick-built construction over concrete podiums—have occupied courtyards with planting beds up to two feet deep, and raised planter boxes to create intensively planted oases.”

Brookland Artist Lofts is an unusual multifamily development. The 78,000 square-foot property provides affordable live/work space for local artists in the Brookland neighborhood. It includes 41 housing units and underground parking, along with a dance studio for neighboring Dance Place, a nonprofit community dance school and arts center. A shared plaza is between the two facilities.

Artspace of Minneapolis developed Brookland Artist Lofts. A nonprofit developer, one of Artspace’s niches is artist live-work projects with the mission to “create, foster and preserve affordable space for artist live-work projects.” Thus far, Artspace has created more than 20 such live-work properties nationwide, with five more under construction and others in the planning phases.