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Photo credit: Troy Theis

AIA Minnesota & The McKnight Foundation Announce

2016 Affordable Housing Design Award goes to Dominium Development's Schmidt Artist Lofts designed by BKV Group

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA – AIA Minnesota and The McKnight Foundation proudly announce that Dominium Development's **Schmidt Artist Lofts** is the winner of the **2016 Affordable Housing Design Award**. Located in St. Paul, this long-vacant landmark was transformed into a dynamic, affordable live-work location for local artists, while simultaneously maintaining the historically intrinsic features of the brewery.

Recognized for the award is Dominium Development; BKV Group; Weis Builders; Peer Engineering; MacRostie Historic Advisors; MacDonald & Mack Architects; Loucks Associates; Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates; Pfister Associates; The Weidt Group; US Bank; Alliant Capital; Cornerstone Real Estate Advisors; St. Paul PED; Ramsey County; and Metropolitan Council; and MN DEED.

Michelle Mongeon-Allen, AIA, AIA Minnesota president said, "AIA Minnesota seeks meaningful ways to encourage excellence in the design of affordable housing. We are pleased to have this opportunity to partner with The McKnight Foundation on this outstanding award to recognize those who are creating innovative, high-quality affordable housing design projects."

"This award underscores our conviction that high-quality design is crucial in building communities that are functional, beautiful, and livable for all," said **Kate Wolford**, president of The McKnight Foundation. "This 100% artist-focused project has multi-faceted relevance to our region as an abandoned historic site, as an adapted re-use project, and as a catalytic project creating economic development opportunities in an overlooked area of St. Paul."



All of the award submissions were reviewed, and the recipient project selected, by an esteemed panel of nationally recognized affordable housing experts, including: **Joseph Kunkel, Assoc. AIA**, Executive Director, Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative, Santa Fe; **Amit Price Patel, AIA**, Principal, David Baker Architects, San Francisco; and **Jess Zimbabwe, AIA**, Founding Director, Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use at National League of Cities, Washington DC.

Jurors remarked: *"This is a big, complicated project. Everything is very tastefully done. Great job preserving the exterior of the building and very nice interior spaces. Some of the spaces seemed "unreal"; they are so eclectic and super-clean. It's doesn't seem messy enough for artwork. If you are saying that affordable housing can be just as nice as market-rate housing, this project certainly makes that case"*

Jurors were instructed to evaluate award submissions using the following criteria:

- **Responsiveness.** How creatively and successfully has the project responded to the needs of the client and the population served? How responsive is the project to demographic shifts and regional housing needs for affordable housing?
- **Community connection.** Was the project developed through a strong, collaborative project team? Did it show participation from the larger public, including neighbors, future users of the building, or citizens at large?
- **Long-term asset.** Did the project provide a long-term asset to the client, occupants, and the community? How did design contribute to the project's long-term financial and social viability? Did design choices support community interaction and enhance community networks?
- **Excellent design quality.** Did the project demonstrate exceptional design quality - responsive to physical and social contexts as well as to any constraints imposed by funding and regulatory agencies?

Award recipients will be featured throughout the year and receive their award at the annual 2016 AIA Minnesota Awards Dinner on December 2. The Schmidt Artist Lofts project will be included in an AIA Minnesota's Housing Advocacy Committee 2017 Search for Shelter event. Project boards will be displayed at the AIA Minnesota's 2016 Convention in November. A feature article with photographs will be written, to include award juror responses, for an issue of AIA Minnesota's magazine *Architecture MN*.

To learn more about the award program at <http://www.aia-mn.org/get-involved/aia-minnesota-awards/affordable-housing-design-award/>

See all the past Affordable Housing Design Award recipient videos at
<http://www.aia-mn.org/features/podcasts-videos/>

The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at www.aia-mn.org, visit www.facebook.com/aiaminnesota, and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.

The McKnight Foundation seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grantmaking, collaboration, and encouragement of strategic policy reform. Founded in 1953 and independently endowed by William and Maude McKnight, the foundation had assets of approximately \$2.1 billion and granted about \$88 million in 2015. Learn more at mcknight.org.