

## Normandie Village

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East Hollywood, California

Project Type:  
Residential

Case No:  
C030019

Year:  
2000

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### SUMMARY

Newly constructed and inventive affordable rental housing built in East Hollywood, California. A local developer and nonprofit made use of a vacant lot and city funding to provide housing for large, low-income families

### FEATURES

- Affordable housing
  - Private/nonprofit joint venture
  - Urban infill project
  - Energy efficiency
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### SPECIAL FEATURES

- Affordable housing
- Private/nonprofit joint venture
- Urban infill project
- Energy efficiency

### DEVELOPER

O.N.E. Company and SIPA, co-general partners  
1747 Normandie Partners, L.P.  
10794 Weyburn Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90024  
310-396-8627

### DESIGN ARCHITECT

O.N.E. Company Architecture + O.N.E.  
2506 Fourth Street  
Santa Monica, California 90404  
310-475-8090

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Katherine Spitz & Associates  
4212 1/2 Glencoe Avenue  
Marina del Ray, California 90202  
310-574-4460

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Normandie Village has curb appeal—its cream-colored exterior and lush landscaping create an eye-catching addition to a diverse immigrant Los Angeles neighborhood. Unlike traditional block-style or monolithic apartment buildings, Normandie Village provides a tranquil, aesthetically pleasing environment for 16 very-low-income families (earning 35 percent to 50 percent of the area median income). The project is nestled among older single-family bungalows along Normandie Avenue in East Hollywood and was built to house larger extended families.

Totalling 16 units, the development offers two three-bedroom flats, five three-bedroom multilevel townhomes, eight four-bedroom multilevel townhomes, and one two-bedroom manager's apartment. Amenities include an outdoor patio, a tot lot, gated parking, a community garden, a communal room with kitchen, a laundry room, and richly colored, symbolic murals that are a source of community pride.

Built on the site of an overgrown vacant lot, Normandie Village now is fully occupied and houses a wide range of families—Armenian, Thai, Filipino, Latino, African American, and Korean. Besides serving an underserved market, the project has an outstanding design, and it was completed on time and under budget—a model of what can be accomplished in the complex realm of affordable housing development. ULI awarded Normandie Village an Award of Excellence in Small-Scale Residential Development in 1999.

## DEVELOPMENT

After the January 1994 Northridge earthquake, the city of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) issued a notice of availability of funds, inviting joint ventures to submit proposals for developing infill housing in neighborhoods that had suffered damage. The CRA offered to provide funds to cover acquisition and soft costs and a partial construction loan. A local affordable housing developer, O.N.E. Company, decided to take advantage of the offer and, to provide a support network for future tenants, to team up with a local nonprofit organization. After interviewing several, O.N.E. Company chose SIPA (Search to Involve Pilipino Americans), a nonprofit contract provider that was formed 26 years ago to assist Filipino immigrants but that since had expanded its clientele to include all minorities. O.N.E. Company, owned and operated by four women who have extensive experience in general contracting, architecture, financing, and project management, assumed the primary development role, while SIPA designed and implemented a social services program.

The city of Los Angeles had several requirements for the project: the site had to be within certain neighborhoods, and the development had to contain certain safety and crime-deterrent measures in its design, remain affordable for 55 years, and house an underserved niche in the affordable housing market. In the case of Normandie Village, the city asked that O.N.E. and SIPA create a village setting for large, low-income, culturally and ethnically heterogeneous families.

## PLANNING AND DESIGN

O.N.E. Company chose a vacant lot surrounded by post–World War II single-family bungalows and took the project's name from its street, Normandie Avenue. The site is close to downtown, public transportation, and convenience retail stores, and it is at the crossroads of two immigrant neighborhoods: Thai Town to the west and Little Armenia to the south. The community raised no objections to Normandie Village during planning or construction.

The development team knew that it wanted to create a unique and hospitable community while incorporating the city's requirements. The half-acre site allowed for 16 units, set back off the street and overlooking an interior courtyard. A locking front gate, exterior lighting, and intercom system provide security. The front gate opens onto a landscaped courtyard that serves as a community garden, common space, and a playground. Balconies and walkways encircle the courtyard, encouraging socializing and allowing residents to observe activity in common areas.

The unit plans had to be designed in accordance with guidelines established by the Los Angeles CRA following extensive postoccupancy evaluation of its previous affordable housing projects, and the development team was committed to providing open space along with generously sized units. These factors required a density of 32 units per acre and yielded the interlocked townhouse model, with units on the first floor having upstairs bedrooms and units on the fourth floor having downstairs bedrooms. One of the units, which adjoins an office used for administering the social services program, is used for the manager's apartment.

The development team integrated features such as murals designed by Filipino artist Eliseo Silva (which were selected in a competition), a central play area for the numerous resident children, a community room, and ample landscaping along the building and in planters on second-floor decks. In addition to the landscaping, which provides cooling and shade, Normandie Village uses passive solar design, awnings on south- and west-facing windows, cross-ventilation in units, and energy-conserving appliances. A 19-space gated parking lot is located out of sight at the rear of the property.

## FINANCING

O.N.E. Company was required to produce a feasibility study and to cover other predevelopment costs in order to

apply for the necessary city funds. Once O.N.E. and SIPA received the CRA grant, which covered acquisition, some construction costs, and permanent soft loans, they entered into a limited partnership with Fannie Mae. Fannie Mae made a 99.5 percent equity investment of \$2.1 million based on an allocation of low-income housing tax credits by the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee at the rate of 75 cents per dollar of equity. With this backing, the partnership was able to secure construction and bridge loans from Bank of America's Community Development Bank.

Normandie Village was completed on time and under budget in January 1999. It was fully leased before completion and has maintained 100 percent occupancy since the first month after opening. Because the project came in under projections, the partnership was able to repay the CRA approximately \$130,000, including \$57,600 in interest originally expected to be paid from residual operating cash flow and approximately \$74,400 in an outright loan repayment. Cash flow is structured so that the project remains affordable for 55 years.

Monthly rents are projected to increase 3 percent per year and as incomes rise, residents will be expected to pay additional rent. Tenants were chosen through a lottery; the developer has reported very few problems with tenants or turnover.

#### EXPERIENCE GAINED

- The development team formed a solid, productive relationship with the city redevelopment agency and easily reached consensus on issues. The city's design guidelines were not overly restrictive, and the city agreed to cover the extra cost of high-quality materials. Although building spacious, affordable housing might have seemed daunting, city support greatly aided the development team.
- Meeting a strong market need saved the developer marketing and vacancy costs.
- Working with a nonprofit organization gave O.N.E. Company insight on tenant needs, and the social services offered have helped to keep the community stable. The partnership was mutually beneficial: O.N.E. Company educated SIPA on the development process, and now SIPA is moving forward with other community development projects.
- Nontypical amenities such as public art and open space have proven to be sources of community pride and contribute to the project's villagelike atmosphere. The landscaping, art, and excellent property maintenance help to create a sense of well-being among neighborhood residents.
- Building on a one-acre infill lot in a modestly scaled neighborhood was a challenge, but its sensitive design blends the project into the surrounding area.

PROJECT DATA			
LAND USE INFORMATION			
Site area: 22,804 square feet (2,118 square meters), approximately 0.52 acre (0.21 hectare) Total dwelling units planned/completed: 16/16 Gross density: 30.8 units per acre (75.5 per hectare) Off-street parking spaces: 19			
LAND USE PLAN			
Use	Area (acres/hectares)	Percent of site	
Buildings	0.22/0.09	43	
Roads/paved areas	0.07/0.03	12	
Common open space	0.10/0.04	19	
Side yards/front yards	0.13/0.05	25	
Total	0.52/0.21	100	
RESIDENTIAL UNIT INFORMATION			
Unit type	Unit size (square feet/square meters)	Number of units planned/built	Range of initial rents
Two-bedroom flat	857/80	1/1	Manager's unit
Three-bedroom flat	1,136–1,191/106–111	2/2	\$363–534
Three-bedroom townhouse	1,235–1,246/115–116	5/5	\$363–534
Four-bedroom townhouse	1,540/143	8/8	\$411–595
DEVELOPMENT COST			
Cost	Total		
Site acquisition	\$417,471		
Construction	\$1,898,603		
Site improvement	\$209,884		
Soft costs	\$986,239		
Total development costs	\$3,512,198		
DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE			
Planning started: February 1995 Site purchased: October 1996 Construction started: October 1997 Rental started: September 1998 Project completed: December 1998			

## DIRECTIONS

*From Los Angeles International Airport:* Take Century Boulevard to I-405 north to I-10 (San Bernadino Freeway) east to I-110 north (toward Pasadena). Take Route 101 (Hollywood Freeway) north (toward Hollywood), exit at Normandie Avenue (north), and go approximately one mile to 1747 Normandie Avenue (one-half block north of Hollywood Boulevard on left/west side of street).

*Driving time:* Approximately 35 minutes in nonpeak traffic.

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This Development Case Study is intended as a resource for subscribers in improving the quality of future projects. Data contained herein were made available by the project's development team and constitute a report on, not an endorsement of, the project by ULI-the Urban Land Institute.

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Normadie Village as seen from Normandie Avenue.



Children make use of the centrally located playground.



An example of the commissioned murals that decorate the facade. The murals use symbols from the cultures of the surrounding community.



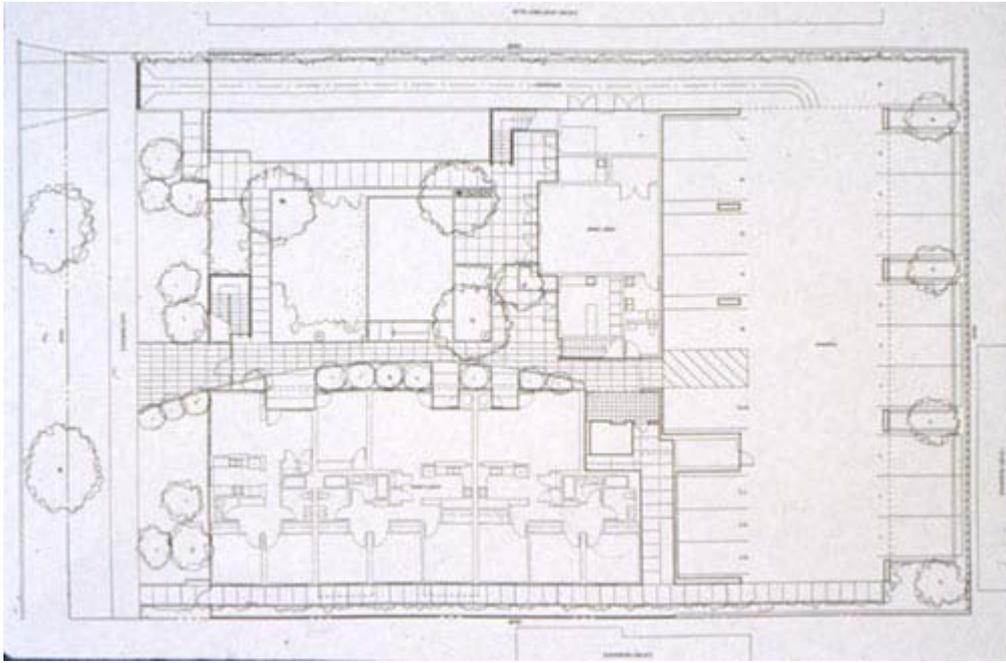
The view from a walkway to a common-use patio and courtyard.



Awnings and landscaping provide shade and contribute to Normandie Village's energy efficiency.



The interior of the community room.



Site plan.