



MCCORMACK BARON SALAZAR

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Virgin Islands Housing Authority and McCormack Baron Salazar celebrate grand opening of Phase III of Louis E. Brown Villas

90 new one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments are available for low-income St. Croix families.

ST. CROIX, U.S. Virgin Islands (June 23, 2020) – Phase III of the Louis E. Brown Villas is now complete and 90 hurricane-resilient, family apartments are ready for occupancy, the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) and McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc. (MBS), announced in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Tuesday. The garden-style Phase III apartments join 102 family units that were completed at Louis E. Brown Villas in 2010 and 40 apartments for seniors that were completed in 2013. The total development cost for all three phases was \$80,754,500 and included financing support from VIHA.

The new two-story apartments feature an energy-efficient appliance package, ceiling fans, ceramic tile flooring, cable TV hook-ups and window blinds. Each apartment was designed for optimal air flow and cross ventilation, with low VOC interior paint and non-vinyl, non-carpet flooring for better air quality. Generous site amenities help make the community vibrant and livable, including an outdoor recreational field, meandering sidewalks for daily strolls, a tot lot and pavilion, fencing, parking controls, a community room, exercise facility, a business center with computer lab, a library, central laundry facility, and on-site management offices. The property offers a minimum of 108 off-street parking spaces. In addition, the community employs a full-time supportive services coordinator to help residents access healthcare and other support systems to improve their quality of life.

“Together with our partners, we have bounced back from two Category 5 hurricanes to completely transform the old Louis E. Brown with an attractive affordable housing model for today,” VIHA Executive Director Robert Graham said. “Every resident deserves this quality of housing to nurture their families, and with the support of Governor Bryan, we are on a roll to revitalize all of our communities on St. Croix.”



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“Today is a very special day in the redevelopment of the Louis E. Brown Villas and I regret that the COVID-19 crisis is preventing Project Manager Sandra Seals and I from attending with you in person,” McCormack Baron Salazar president Vincent Bennett said in prepared remarks. “The new Louis E. Brown is designed to not only change the lives of the families who will live here – it is also a demonstration of how to overcome obstacles of building high-quality, affordable, resilient housing in the islands. It is our hope and intention that these apartments will withstand the storms to come and be home to our residents for many years.”

VIHA resident board commissioner Kaye Gumbs, who moved to the new community from hurricane-torn JFK Terrace, said Louis E. Brown Villas -- III gave her a career opportunity as well as a better lifestyle.

“As a former resident of the John F. Kennedy community, my life over the past three years has taken a drastic turn, not for the worse, but for the best,” Gumbs said. “I was given the privilege to participate in the Section 3 program, a stepping-stone to learning valuable construction skills. I was then offered employment by J. Benton Construction, one of the Virgin Islands’ best builders. And now I live in this safe, breathtaking community.”

Located on the site of the former Louis E. Brown Villas that were built in 1970, the new community has 22 one-bedroom, 46 two-bedroom and 22 three-bedroom units for low-income families. The entire development meets the Enterprise Green Communities and Virgin Islands Housing Authority standards, with rooftop solar hot water heaters for each apartment, high-efficiency lighting, and solar photovoltaic panels sized to offset the cost of the clubhouse electricity usage. Storm water is reused across the site for potable water.

About the Virgin Islands Housing Authority

The Virgin Islands Housing Authority is an independent, federally funded agency with a mission to improve lives through housing that’s inviting, safe and affordable. The agency provides housing assistance to over 4,000 low and moderate-income households across the Territory and offers programs that help them build self-sufficiency. An active board and far-sighted local government support the agency as it delivers on a 10-year plan to revitalize all of its public housing on St. Croix. For more information visit www.vihousing.org.

About McCormack Baron Salazar, Inc.

McCormack Baron Salazar is one of the nation’s leading developers, managers, and asset managers of economically integrated urban neighborhoods. Since 1973, the firm has been an innovator of community development and urban revitalization in 43 cities, having built more than 21,000 high-quality homes for families, children, seniors and veterans.

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