

AURORA BEACON-NEWS

# Work finished turning former Aurora schools into housing



The former Todd School at 100 Oak Ave. is one of two former Aurora school buildings that have been turned into workforce housing. (McShane Construction)

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News

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Construction is complete on the conversion of the former Lincoln and Todd schools in Aurora into Fox Valley Apartments, featuring 47 units of workforce housing.

Rosemont-based McShane Construction Co. announced final completion of the work this week, although Visionary Ventures, of Itasca, has been taking names for leasing the apartments for several months.

A consortium called Housing for All, LLC, made up of Visionary Ventures, Cordodan Clark & Associates, of Aurora, and JTE Real Estate Services, of Aurora, collaborated in the redevelopment of the two former, unused schools into the housing units.

“We are very excited to announce the completion of Fox Valley Apartments,” said David Rintz, McShane’s regional vice president of multi-family. “Transforming two historical school buildings into apartments has been a fascinating process. We’re proud to be able to preserve the rich history of these schools while giving them a new purpose that will better suit this community.”



McShane remodeled Lincoln Elementary School, 641 S. Lake St., a 39,000-square-foot building originally constructed in 1893, to accommodate 14 apartment units. The school was closed in 2007 due to low enrollment and remained vacant until construction of the apartments began.



The remodeled hallway in the former Lincoln School on South Lake Street in Aurora still has the school's lockers, as well as other historic elements. The building is one of two former Aurora schools that have been turned into workforce housing. (McShane Construction)

On the same site, McShane constructed a new two-story, 28,000-square-foot building to offer 22 additional affordable workforce units.



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At Todd School, 100 Oak Ave., the company transformed the early 1900s school building into 11 apartment units and a VNA Health Care clinic for underinsured and uninsured West Aurora School District families.

“We are excited at the opportunity to work with McShane to bring affordable housing to Aurora and be able to transform historical properties that may have otherwise sat vacant for years to come,” said Shelly Tucciarelli, Housing For All managing partner, and executive director of Visionary Ventures.

During the remodeling process, McShane kept historical features of the schools, including trim, flooring, chalkboards, lockers, windows and doors. Designed by Cordogan Clark & Associates, units are offered in one- to three-bedroom floor plans. Shared amenities include a laundry room, a community room, a computer lab and tenant storage.



This new building next to the former Lincoln School site on South Lake Street in Aurora is part of the 36 workforce housing units now open at the site. (McShane Construction)

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The Aurora City Council in 2022 approved using \$2.9 million of its HOME Investment Partnerships allocation toward the projects along with \$600,000 from its Community Development Block Grant funds, both federally-funded programs.

The housing is for working people, who must pass background checks and income-eligibility requirements, as authorized by the Illinois Housing Development Authority. That state agency made available to the developers low-income housing tax credits to fund the bulk of the development.

The apartment units are for tenants at 30% to 60% of the area's median income. That means the units are for people making between \$18,000 and \$63,000 a year, depending on family size. Tenants pay for electricity for lights, cooking and air conditioning, and the landlord pays the heat, water, sewer and garbage.

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