

New York, New York

Work Force Housing Today

Chelsea Court, Louise Braverman, Architect

Chelsea Court, an affordable housing project specifically designed for 18 previously homeless and low-income tenants, is a tribute to the belief that aesthetic environments enhance the lives of all people, whether rich or poor. Community facilities including a lounge, conference room, laundry and offices complement the layout of apartments.

Today Chelsea Court, after a total gut renovation including new structural, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and fire protection systems, is an environment where tenants can seamlessly become part of their new neighborhood. The lives of the inhabitants are open to the street, the internal garden and to the community around them. The "blue ribbon" of translucent glass on the street-front travels inside the skewed public corridor in the form of metallic blue display niches, past a cubic metallic blue and green security desk and up the chromatically sequenced glazed concrete masonry blocks of the stairwells. Indoors and outdoors merge; the roof garden is part of the apartments and the street is part of the office. An art wall displaying a 2'x 25' photomural of an exterior image of Coney Island runs through the interior public corridor. The design of Chelsea Court attempts to expand the typical boundaries of SRO housing within the context of a tight budget.

Chelsea Court breaks the misconception that a tight budget in affordable housing must create an environment lacking in bright spaces, and modern design.

The design of Chelsea Court won a 2003 AIA New York State Design Award of Merit.

