

STRUCTURES 2006

RUNNER-UP

ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN OF THE YEAR

MIRO DESIGN GROUP

Keeping affordable housing attractive

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When MIRO Design Group wraps up the huge Corde Terra project next year, the firm will have some impressive numbers to boast.

In the past five years, it has delivered at least 12 other affordable housing projects to the valley. The total number of MIRO-designed affordable units will swell to 1,300, with Corde Terra being the largest such project in the Bay Area.

There has been no shortage of interest in the Corde Terra project at Tully Road and 10th Street, which will offer 300 family rental units, 43 detached single homes, and 200 senior apartments. Ground broke in November 2005 and construction should be completed by April 2007.

According to Jonathan Emami, head of MIRO, Corde Terra has been named one of the largest tax credit deals in the nation. Financing for the project came from numerous levels, including federal, local, and private.

It's not hard to guess that the demand for MIRO's affordable housing is strong in Silicon Valley. Mr. Emami said MIRO's buildings have become a "staple" in their neighborhoods.



COURTESY MIRO DESIGN GROUP

The MIRO-designed Corde Terra project on Tully Road in San Jose is the largest affordable housing project in the Bay Area.

"We take pride in not just doing an average project, but going above and beyond with architectural features," said Mr. Emami. "Many of our projects don't have the feel of affordable housing. After all, it's still a place where people live and we believe you shouldn't cut corners with the design."

In June, MIRO completed the Bella Castello development offering 88 affordable apartment units at 12th and Keyes streets. The firm projected that it would reach 100 percent occupancy at the property within six months. Demand, however, proved overwhelming and the units filled in only two months.

The Mediterranean-themed property utilized gardens,

public spaces, and a sound wall to buffer it from a bustling nearby neighborhood while simultaneously designing the building and walking corridors to help the large project blend into a local urban scene. Amenities at Bella Castello include a computer learning center, ESL classes, a homework center, and fitness complex.

Future projects like Bella Castello and Corde Terra are already in the pipeline at MIRO. The design group is a division of ROEM Corp., a developer of homes and multi-family projects in Silicon Valley for over 20 years.

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