

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUCCESS STORY



## MONTECITO II

6650 FRANKLIN AVENUE, HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028

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### KEY STATS

**Developer:** Thomas Safran & Associates

**Architect:** BSB Design

**Contractor:** Ruscilli Construction

**Financing:** State funding from NPLH program of HCD, HUD Section 8 Project-based Vouchers

**Income Range:** Below 60% AMI

**Total Units:** 64

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Montecito II is an affordable senior housing community. The five-story building offers 64 studio units, including one manager's unit, and is exclusively for residents aged 55 and older. Each unit features modern amenities such as a full kitchen, air conditioning, vinyl plank flooring, and either a tub or shower in the bathroom.

The development is situated on a 0.78-acre site, previously occupied by a surface parking lot adjacent to the historic Montecito Apartments, an Art Deco building constructed in 1928. Montecito II complements its neighbor both architecturally and functionally, sharing amenities like a community room, fitness center, laundry facilities, and a rooftop terrace with views of the Hollywood Hills.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

Montecito II Senior Apartments stands out for its architectural distinction, social impact and successful navigation of a complex development framework supported by state and local programs. This 64-unit addition to the historic Montecito Apartments in Hollywood brings deeply affordable housing to seniors aged 55 and over in a transit-rich, amenity-laden urban core, while preserving the integrity and character of a cherished historic resource.

The development team used strategic layering of incentives and entitlements to bring this project to life. Through California Government Code Section 65915 and the City of Los Angeles Density Bonus Ordinance (LAMC 12.22 A.25), the project secured a 35% density bonus by restricting 99% of its new units to low and very low-income seniors. This substantial affordability commitment unlocked vital incentives, including increased building height and reduced yard setbacks – on- and off-menu concessions critical for fitting a financially viable development onto a tight 0.78-acre urban infill site.

Additionally, a Conditional Use Permit (LAMC 12.24 U.26) was required to exceed the maximum density permitted by right. The final plan incorporated 64 affordable senior units and one manager's unit, a configuration that would not have been feasible without these layered entitlements. AB 744 further facilitated the project's success by allowing a reduced parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit due to its proximity to frequent transit, a key factor in site feasibility and cost management.

Architecturally, the new structure complements the adjacent 10-story historic Montecito Apartments with clean lines, quality materials, and a contemporary design that honors but does not mimic its predecessor. The shared lobby, rooftop terrace, and 7,000 square feet of open space, including landscaped courtyards and an upper-level community room, create a cohesive intergenerational senior campus with robust amenities and opportunities for social connection.

Ultimately, Montecito II exemplifies how affordable housing can be achieved through intelligent design, strategic use of incentives, and a commitment to community-oriented development despite highly restrictive site conditions and entitlement hurdles.



## SOLVING CHALLENGES

Designing and developing Montecito II Senior Apartments presented an array of complex challenges that required creativity, coordination, and a deep understanding of policy, entitlement, and urban design. As an infill development adjacent to a historic landmark, the project team faced physical, regulatory, and contextual constraints that tested every facet of the design process.

The most immediate obstacle was the site itself: a compact, 0.78-acre parcel with over 20 feet of grade change and limited street frontage. Fitting 64 residential units, two levels of parking, and the required open space into a narrow, sloped site required intricate massing, efficient floor plans, and thoughtful circulation strategies. Integrating

a new structure next to the Montecito Apartments, a legally non-conforming and historically protected Art Deco building, added further complexity. The new construction had to be both visually compatible and structurally independent, while also connecting seamlessly through a shared lobby and shared amenities.

Parking presented another challenge. Because the new building replaced surface parking serving the historic building, the team had to reconfigure and expand parking underground and within a new above-grade structure – complying with California AB 744 to reduce required spaces due to the project's location near high-frequency transit.

The architectural response to these constraints was both functional and sensitive. The design respects the historic context without imitation, using articulated façades, varied materials, and setbacks to reduce perceived scale and enhance the pedestrian experience. Sustainability, accessibility, and aesthetics were all prioritized to ensure long-term value for senior residents.

