

The Casitas on Broadway housing project is located south of the historic Sam Hughes neighborhood in Tucson, Arizona. The site is approximately 1.6 acres in size, and fronts on Broadway, an east-west arterial road that leads to downtown Tucson. The project will share a block with existing single-family detached homes to the north. Adjacent blocks east and west of the site consist of one and two story commercial structures housing a mix of stores and offices. There is an existing bus stop at the south edge of the site.

Because of its location between a low-density residential neighborhood and a commercial area, the site offers an ideal blend of access and privacy for elderly residents. Residents will be able to take the bus to cultural events downtown, or east to two regional malls along Broadway. There is a supermarket within one block, and the University of Arizona is about ten minutes walking distance from the site. The Sam Hughes neighborhood offers quiet, shaded streets for walking just to the north.

The proposed project includes 57 units consisting of a mix of two story apartment buildings and single story semi-detached duplexes organized around four courtyards. Each apartment has either a corner window or a projecting bay window, allowing for a greater connection to the outdoors for the residents. The courtyards offer each resident a space for gardening, socializing, or relaxing in the shade. The two story buildings face Broadway to the south, and are designed to mitigate sound and light pollution from traffic. Building materials and massing relate to the existing conditions in Sam Hughes, and reflect the climate of the desert southwest.

The owner's commitment to sustainable design has greatly influenced the form of this project. The project was designed to maximize sustainable features and will be one of the first HUD projects to achieve LEED certification. The choice of an infill site, near existing infrastructure and existing community resources also makes this site an ideal one for seniors, because shopping, medical care and recreational activities can be reached by walking or by bus, rather than driving. The desire to qualify for points in the Energy and Atmosphere section of LEED for Homes will produce a healthier building (elimination of materials that off-gas formaldehyde, wrapping of all ductwork, two week flush of the building to eliminate construction dust.) The same things that improve the performance of the building for LEED also make it a better, healthier building for seniors. Energy saving measures such as compact distribution for ductwork and piping, high insulation values, and efficient mechanical units also save cost for the not for profit that must operate the building on a limited budget. Many sustainable design goals reinforce the goals of good design practice for the elderly.