

Dublin Crossing



DUBLIN CROSSING, NON-PROFIT SENIOR HOUSING, MANKATO, MINNESOTA

PRODUCT CATEGORIES

FLOORING

J&J ENVISION CARPET TILE –
INCOGNITO MODULAR, INDEX
MODULAR, AND KINETEX UMBRA

FORBO MARMOLEUM MODULAR
AND ALLURA LVT

CABINETS & MILLWORK

SMART CABINETS KCMA AND
ESP CERTIFIED NAUF

DOORS

LYNDEN GREENDOR, NAUF,
FSC

PAINT

LOW VOC SHERWIN WILLIAMS
PRO-MAR 200

Dublin Crossing is a 50-unit, 3-story affordable workforce housing development in Mankato, Minnesota. Developed by CommonBond Communities, the project includes 100% affordable units to house families and formerly homeless with one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments. Amenities include a playground, community room with serving kitchen, patio with grilling station, and computer lab. The development meets Enterprise’s Green Communities Criteria with the Minnesota Overlay.

The timing of HomeFree’s partnership with CommonBond Communities was serendipitous. At the time CommonBond—the developer, owner and operator of over 6,000 affordable housing units—was undertaking a review and update of the standard material specification for their whole portfolio for new construction and maintenance of their buildings.

The existing standard specification, which meets the Enterprise 2015 Green Communities Criteria, was a strong

foundation on which to build. Benchmarking their current practice against the HomeFree hazard spectrums, they realized that many of the recommendations were already included in their current practice. This includes low-VOC paint, and doors and millwork using NAUF (No Added Urea Formaldehyde) composite wood products.

FOCUS ON FLOORING

Employing the Dublin Crossing project as an opportunity to explore alternative flooring options, the project archi-

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

FLOORING

It is important to consider health when evaluating the performance of flooring. Many flooring products contain hazardous chemicals, which can migrate from products and expose residents, particularly young children crawling on floors.

In general, avoid unidentified or hazardous recycled content such as post-consumer recycled vinyl and rubber, fly ash, or cathode ray tubes (from old TVs). These materials can introduce toxic heavy metals like lead and mercury into products.

To reduce potential exposures, prefer non-vinyl floors when possible. If specifying vinyl flooring, make sure it is free of hazardous phthalates.

If using carpet, look for products that do not use fluorinated stain-repellent treatments, also known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This class of chemicals is a high priority to avoid because they can be toxic, persist in the environment, and build up in body tissues.

For details, visit the [Flooring Product](#) page on HomeFree.

tect Kaas Wilson worked closely with CommonBond's construction project manager to identify several alternatives for consideration during the bidding process. They used HomeFree's hazard spectrum and other information to reduce toxics in potential new flooring products for their standard specification.

Balancing multiple attributes while making material choices is not new for CommonBond and is a familiar challenge to every developer/owner of affordable housing. The charge was to find products that were proven to be durable, easy to maintain, met acoustical requirements for specific spaces, and included the HomeFree-recommended health attributes.

The added cost for many of the healthier options and durability concerns are barriers faced by affordable housing developers across the United States. Both played a role in the decision to pilot healthier flooring options in the common areas at Dublin Crossing. This allowed CommonBond to gain first-hand experience with the durability and maintenance of new flooring materials with limited and acceptable risk. The project used Forbo Marmoleum Modular, a linoleum product, which is rated green on the HomeFree hazard spectrum. The HomeFree research team found this in line with national trends for projects, which use healthier flooring products such as linoleum, rubber, or biobased in the common areas, but not in the resident units. Flooring used

in units included Forbo Allura LVT that is phthalate-free and does not contain post-consumer recycled content.

CHANGE PRACTICE

In addition to a review and update of the standard material specification, CommonBond is taking steps to embed consideration of material health and toxicity into their development and maintenance practices. Simply by preferring materials with HPDs through their procurement process, they are encouraging manufacturer transparency. All five flooring products used at Dublin Crossing have HPDs.

Coincident with the Dublin Crossing project, CommonBond reviewed cleaning practices at one of their properties in Minneapolis. Initiated by CommonBond's Green Task Force and inspired by direction from the leadership, Pat Stockhaus director of facilities management said, "We want to be good stewards of the environment, CommonBond Communities properties, and our residents." Working through the process to gain buy-in from their cleaning contractor, cost implications, and training and education on the new products, the result was reducing the number of products from 20 to 8. Stockhaus remarked, "Through this process, our cleaning contractor embraced the new products and is looking at using them on other accounts." To read more about CommonBond's efforts to their green cleaning practice check-out the HomeFree blog post, [HomeFree: Conversation With a Demonstration Project Partner](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION and WAYS TO ACT, VISIT: homefree.healthybuilding.net

Neither HBN nor its HomeFree program endorses or certifies products. The specific products noted have not been reviewed or endorsed by HBN. They are included for informational purposes, and demonstrate choices made by HomeFree users based on multiple factors including cost and availability, utilizing HomeFree guidance to make healthier material choices within project constraints.