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October 27, 2021

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**MILWAUKEE SOLDIERS HOME RETURNS SIX BUILDINGS TO THE SERVICE OF VETERANS**

*The Alexander Company celebrates the grand opening of six historic buildings,  
setting precedent for national historic restoration efforts*

**MILWAUKEE, WI** – [The Alexander Company](#) recently celebrated the grand opening of six buildings on the Milwaukee Soldiers Home campus, a monumental milestone marking the completion of a complex, decade-long preservation and rehabilitation project achieved through the collaboration of organizations nationwide.

“This incredible preservation success demonstrates the benefits of historic restoration and what can be achieved through a successful public-private partnership,” said Joe Alexander, President of The Alexander Company. “It serves as proof that strategic partnerships, visionary leadership, and creative funding cannot just save buildings, but tackle homelessness, ignite a community, and serve as a national model.”

Opened to veterans in [March 2021](#), the six restored buildings now offer 101 permanent supportive housing units for veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Veteran residents receive access to a range of supportive services, including case management, educational training and employment assistance, benefits assistance, recreational activities, independent living skills training, sobriety maintenance, and nutritional support.

Organizations across the country, as well as locally, joined together to make this complex historic project a reality. Significant grassroots support from preservationists, historians, veterans, elected officials, and business leaders aided in identifying a vision for the future use of the district’s vacant buildings.

The Alexander Company and the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) brought together their expertise in historic preservation and adaptive reuse, commitment to providing high-quality, affordable housing, and combined 90 years of real estate and property management experience to lead the restoration project.

**Honoring the history of the Soldiers Home through architecture, art, and design**

Established in 1867 after the Civil War, the Milwaukee Soldiers Home is one of three original Soldiers Homes in the country, with some of the oldest and most historic buildings in the VA system. It is one of only 43 National Historic Landmarks in Wisconsin and one of Wisconsin’s most historic assets. However, after years of service housing veterans, buildings on the Soldiers Home campus were vacated more than 30 years ago and subsequently fell into disrepair.

To further preserve the history of the district and connect generations of veterans, many of the buildings’ original features were restored and decorated with a mix of modern and historic design elements. Among the restored architecture, residents and visitors will find Old Main’s [iconic gothic windows](#) and historic grand entrance brought back to life, alongside [refinished wood and terrazzo floors](#) and [decorative tin ceiling tiles](#). Crucial updates to the buildings’ infrastructure, including plumbing, electrical, and paint removal, laid the groundwork for the architects to equip spaces with accessible entrances and community areas.

Over [175 pieces of artwork](#) are on display as part of the buildings’ permanent furnishings, all curated by the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, with all selections either form Wisconsin veterans’ archival collections or featuring Wisconsin veteran stories. Artwork and artifacts also will be feature in the building’s [History Center](#) to honor and celebrate stories from original veteran residents.

“This project shows it takes a village to raise a village,” said Tony Perez, Secretary-Executive Director of HACM. “The intentionality of the VA, the commitment of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), Mayor Barrett’s support and the involvement of investors, philanthropic-minded corporations and individuals are what made the preservation of Soldiers Home possible.”

### **Setting a national precedent for collaborative restoration projects**

The restoration project began in 2011 when the Milwaukee Soldiers Home Landmark District was added to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s (NTHP) list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. Following this honor, the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance (MPA) and the NTHP joined together to form the Milwaukee Soldiers Home Community Advisory Council. The Alexander Company joined the Council, alongside groups of committed veterans and preservation organizations, to explore the protection, repair, and rehabilitation of the Milwaukee Soldiers Home National Landmark District.

In 2016, The Alexander Company responded to requests from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) seeking developers interested in rehabilitating the campus’ six unused historic buildings using an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL) agreement. As part of the EUL agreement, the VA chose The Alexander Company and HACM to lead a team for the restoration and rehabilitation project.

“The EUL is an authority that’s fairly unique to the VA that enables us to leverage our assets, particularly lands and buildings, to be out-leased to private sector or public partners to be repurposed, rehabilitated, and put back into use for supportive housing for veterans,” said Brett Simms, Executive Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management, US Department of Veterans Affairs. “The collaboration on this project was outstanding and enabled success. Finding a way to replicate that collaboration with partners in other parts of the country, while maintaining that local, state, and national connection, sets a new precedent for projects of this nature.”

The \$44 million project was a collective effort of many to preserve this National Historic Landmark. Funding for the project came from sources including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, grants, fundraising, and other soft financing options.

The preservation and restoration story of the Milwaukee Soldiers Home is one of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles through perseverance, teamwork, and creativity. Just as it did when it was developed more than 150 years ago, the Soldiers Home today is poised to change the face of veteran care, serving as a replicable example of what is possible through innovative partnerships.

### **ASSETS FOR MEDIA USE**

- [Digital media kit](#) with photos of the building exteriors, apartment units, community spaces, and grounds
- [Rehabilitation video with veteran resident interview](#) – exclusive access, hasn’t been shared publicly yet

### **ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS**

[The Alexander Company](#): Project Developer, Co-owner, Architect; [The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee \(HACM\)](#): Co-owner; [Center for Veterans Issues](#): Facility Operator; [Milwaukee VA Medical Center](#): Supportive Resident Service Provider offering onsite education, employment assistance, financial assistance, counseling, and more; [Ramlow/Stein Architects](#): Architect for Old Main; [JP Cullen](#): General Contractor.

### **ABOUT THE ALEXANDER COMPANY**

The Alexander Company has nearly 40 years’ experience specializing in urban infill development and historic preservation. Based in Madison, Wisconsin, the award-winning, full-service real estate development firm gives new life to historically significant buildings and downtown neighborhoods nationwide. Learn more at [alexandercompany.com](http://alexandercompany.com).