



2007 Award of Excellence
AIA Montana Design Awards Program

Merit Award



Photography by Architect

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The Gold Dust

The Gold Dust creates eighteen, beautifully designed, affordable housing units. The site is in the heart of Missoula, Montana's Historic Railroad District on five (previously vacant) city lots totaling 19,500 sf. Total building area is 17,130 sf, with a 16-unit three story building on the street, two single-family "carriage house" units on the alley and a shared laundry/workshop building, also on the alley. Final completion of the project was June 2003. Residents must earn less than 50% of median income; rents are from \$255-\$696, including utilities. Apartments range from a 320 sf studio to 810 sf three bedroom apartments. Units are designed to encourage self-sufficiency with a particular emphasis placed on design for studio-artist residents. Three apartments are fully accessible and two units are adaptable. Common spaces for the use of all residents include: the laundry and workshop, garden plots for each resident in a roof garden or in planter boxes on grade, and a one thousand sf community room for use both by the residents and the neighboring community. The eighteen parking spaces are accessed off the existing alley. The project guarantees affordability for thirty-five years, dictating the use of high quality, durable materials and systems.

We hope the Gold Dust can serve as an example to other developers and communities via:

- **Zoning:** The project went through a PUD where the current zoning requirements were altered to permit a project in keeping with the historic nature and patterns of the site. *Alter zoning for smart growth.*
- **Rental agreement/Zoning:** Per zoning, 33 parking spaces would have been required, leaving no space for the buildings. In the PUD process, the developer proposed the "bike/per" idea, bringing in a sample lease drafted by their lawyers with a clause that three units would not have a car on the premises. In the end, this was approved because of the lease agreement. *Be creative to reduce parking.*
- **Sustainability:** Due to the many sustainable features of the project, many organizations have requested to feature the Gold Dust on websites, in publications, etc. *Spread the word.*
- **Roof Garden:** Due to the densely developed site, the roof was developed as a community space for barbecues, socializing, etc., as well as for a place where people could grow their own vegetables and flowers. A local organic gardening non-profit will be instructing residents on gardening practices. *Get other local organizations involved to support the mission.*