

CROCKER UMEYA APARTMENTS



Site Address: 425 S Towne Avenue, Los Angeles CA 90013

Project Summary:

In May 2019, LTSC purchased the Umeya Rice Cake Company property located at 4th Street and Crocker Street in Downtown Los Angeles, at the intersection of Skid Row and Little Tokyo. Umeya, a three-generation, Japanese-American family-run business and one of the few remaining legacy businesses in Little Tokyo, had ceased operations in 2017. Since then, the site's 35,000 sq. ft. factory and warehouse, underpinned by 35 subterranean parking spaces, sat vacant. At times its neighbor, Sake Mutual Trading Company, was the only active street presence, its employees making occasional use of the sidewalk to unload inventory. Every day they'd walk past Umeya, on their way home to Little Tokyo or the Metro Gold Line station a few blocks north. Across the street, residents of Little Tokyo Lofts glimpsed full views of Umeya's pink, five-petal flower logo emblazoned across its building, bearing a resemblance to the iconic flower-shaped Japanese rice crackers Umeya was known to manufacture.

Since purchasing the property, LTSC has been working to redevelop the site into a \$100 million, 175 unit mixed-use, transit-oriented development with 100% deeply affordable apartments. A 7-story, environmentally sustainable, new construction project that reuses the existing subterranean parking structure, Umeya Apartments will join together the neighborhood's past and future. It will be part of a scaled solution to today's overwhelming homelessness and affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles, but also an enduring tribute to the historical significance of the Umeya Rice Cake Company. As one of the many Little Tokyo businesses shuttered due to Japanese American internment during World War II, Umeya's story is both one of resilience, as well as a reminder for society not to abide by dehumanizing injustice.

Of the 175 affordable rental units, approximately half of all units will be set aside as permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals. The balance of units will be affordable to households earning less than 50 to 60% of area median income (AMI). The ground floor will be the home to LTSC's supportive services team who will act as the lead service provider and extend wraparound services, including intensive case management services (ICMS), to all residents, when and where they need them most. LTSC will adopt a 'Housing First' approach, with the goal of ensuring all residents stay housed and thrive both personally as well as a part of this community.

In addition to supportive service space, the ground floor will comprise approximately 4,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and more than 4,000 sq. ft. of landscape courtyard that opens up to the sidewalk. Together they will activate Crocker St. and Towne Ave. street frontages, as well as provide through-block connections to a suite of transit improvements that will enhance the pedestrian, bicyclist, and public transit experience. With the goal of becoming a LEED-certified development, Umeya Apartments will feature rooftop solar, passive cooling, bicycle parking, EV charging stations, LED lighting, and low-flow fixtures. The project's inner courtyard will bloom with drought-tolerant, native plantings, resident-

run community gardens, and urban greening for the downtown Los Angeles cityscape. The pièce de résistance will be a visual exhibit that honors the Umeya Rice Cake Company and its significance in the Little Tokyo community.

Other building amenities include: Entry lobby and adjacent manager's office, laundry rooms, and community rooms. The second floor of the project will include a community room to provide additional gathering space for residents. These spaces will support informal and formal programming for residents. There will be adaptive reuse of an existing underground parking garage which will provide parking spaces for residents and commercial spaces on the ground floor: one level of subterranean parking providing a minimum of 29-parking stalls, and 135-bicycle stalls. Additionally, at the ground floor, there will be 2 commercial spaces. These amenities and building design are meant to create a welcoming atmosphere that give space for residents to improve their health and quality of life.

LTSC has a 40-year history of community development, including the construction and preservation of over 1,000 units of affordable housing, provision of social services, preservation of local Little Tokyo businesses, and organizing of community planning and visioning campaigns in Little Tokyo. Given the combination of development experience and our community-driven approach to tackling the housing crises and sustainably preserving Little Tokyo, LTSC is a natural fit with a deep commitment to transforming the Umeya Rice Cake Company building into Umeya Apartments which will not only provide much-needed affordable and permanent supportive housing, but also be a bridge between the two neighborhoods of Little Tokyo and Skid Row.