

# Building from the Best of TUCSON



# Julian Drew Complex

186 East Broadway Boulevard

MIXED USE

## ARCHITECT:

Bill Mueller  
Bill Taylor

## BUILDER/AGENCY:

Business Development  
Finance Corporation  
(BDFC)

## STATUS:

Renovation completed in  
1994 (original construction  
in 1917)

## TYPE:

18,000-square-foot ware-  
house, subdivided into  
11 apartments, 14  
warehouse spaces, and  
4 commercial spaces

Located on the southwest corner of Broadway Boulevard and Fifth Avenue, the two-story Julian Drew Complex was built originally in 1917 with commercial space on the ground floor and a hotel on the second floor. At one time it housed Tucson's first indoor auto showroom. At the time of renovation in 1994, the hotel was no longer in use, and much of the commercial space, including an adjoining warehouse space to the south, was vacant.

Today the building has been completely renovated, with a newly reinforced structural system. An architect's studio, an art gallery, and other small businesses occupy the commercial spaces on the ground floor, and low-income apartments occupy the upper level. The remainder of the warehouse has been divided into fourteen spaces of varying sizes that are used primarily as artists' studios.

A parking area, screened with a rammed-earth sculpted wall, fills the space between the Julian Drew building and the adjacent warehouse structure. During evenings and weekends, various Broadway Boulevard community groups, including the Tucson Arts District Partnership, transform this space with open-air activities. Owners of the Julian Drew Complex not only have restored one of Tucson's historic downtown structures, but also look to restore downtown alliances and public events by encouraging a range of activities onsite.



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## Historical/Cultural

The Julian Drew building formerly housed the old Lewis Hotel, and some of its old fixtures, including the lobby electrical box and working above-door transoms, were saved. Its traditional territorial architecture with red-brick facade (common to turn-of-the-century western mercantile buildings) dominates the corner of Broadway Boulevard and Fifth Avenue, contributing to a unique historic downtown environment.

## Social

Julian Drew Complex management has shown an interest in the maintenance of surrounding buildings and structures by painting their facades and organizing an annual rotating mural project that is displayed on neighboring buildings. The parking area of the complex is used during "Downtown Saturday Nights" for fine arts markets



and musical events. The complex is also home to several youth projects, including Second Chance, an assistance program for at-risk high school students.

### Functional

The parking area's rammed-earth sculpted wall not only encloses the space, buffering it from Broadway Boulevard, but also enhances the streetscape with its native mesquite trees, which provide shade and complement the surrounding landscaping.

### Physical

N/A

### Economic

The Julian Drew Complex was funded partially through a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) HOME program, which finances affordable housing projects. The program requires that funded projects remain as affordable housing for a minimum of ten years. The Business Development Finance Corporation (BDFC), a nonprofit group that assists small businesses with financing, also secured funding for the renovation. BDFC initially worked with the Tucson Arts Coalition, which developed the original concept for this project.

### Issues

The Mayor's "Back to Basics Program" recently awarded BDFC \$40,000 for streetscape development along Arizona Avenue between the Julian Drew Complex and Congress Street.

### Lessons Learned

This building was financially infeasible for rehabilitation until the Uniform Rehabilitation Building Code was adopted. The use of the interior rooms violated previous conservative codes and thus made renovation impossible.

This project owes its success to its creative financing, efforts to maintain the main structure and the structures surrounding it, and the coalitions formed to increase the downtown's open-air activities.

While the Tucson Arts Coalition developed the initial concept and the BDFC assisted in the financing of the project, partnering with the city for HUD financing was critical for completion.

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# Building from the Best of Tucson

If you live in or around Tucson, no doubt you can easily point to recent construction that you believe is not appropriate for our desert community. While it's not difficult to see what doesn't work, it can be hard to identify what does work. What sorts of developments satisfy our civic aspirations? Which buildings fit best in our desert environment? What construction projects best celebrate the cultures and histories that make our community unique?

By profiling residential and commercial developments that draw on the wealth of Tucson's environment, history, and cultures while simultaneously striving to preserve those features, *Building from the Best of Tucson* encourages public discussion that might begin to answer the above questions. Open its pages and get a glimpse of what developments are working best for Tucson and how Tucson might encourage its future developments to further raise our quality of life.

