

Liberty Bank Building



PRODUCT CATEGORIES

FLOORING

ARMSTRONG VIVERO LVT; NO ORTHO-PHTHALATES, NO ANTI-MICROBIALS

COUNTERTOPS

LG HI-MACS SOLID SURFACE; LOW/ZERO VOC ADHESIVES, NO SEALANT REQUIRED, GREENGUARD GOLD

CABINETRY & MILLWORK

FSC; NAUF COMPOSITE WOODDOORS: FSC; NAUF COMPOSITE WOOD

PAINT

LOW/NO VOC PAINTS AND PRIMERS

Liberty Bank Building is a 115-unit affordable housing community located in the Central Area, developed by Capitol Hill Housing (CHH). The design incorporates art and architecture to honor the neighborhood history and the Liberty Bank formerly located on the site. The 101,000 s.f., 6-story building includes apartments - studios, one- and two- bedrooms intended for low-income individuals and families, veterans, and people with disabilities.

Healthy Building Network partnered with Capitol Hill Housing (CHH) on a pacific northwest demonstration project at their Liberty Bank Building. The partnership provided information and research for CHH to explore and select healthier, alternative materials, and led to a renewed, organization-wide commitment to health and their creation of a Healthy Homes Initiative.

CHH was already committed to building high quality sustainable housing,

using HomeFree guidance gave them an opportunity to update and expand their approach to materials beyond their current materials practice, as well as Washington State-required Evergreen Sustainable Development Standard (ESDS). Jess Blanch, Design Associate and Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow at CHH, said, "Working with HomeFree helped us to understand how to think about health and materials in our buildings. It gave us insight to evaluate what we are already doing,

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

COUNTERTOP

Countertops are a key feature of every kitchen and one of the most active surfaces in a home. As such, they should be a key consideration when choosing healthier materials.

As a rule, the simpler the better. Avoid chemicals of highest concern by choosing engineered stone or solid surface. These materials do not need to be sealed regularly, avoiding future chemical exposure and eliminating maintenance.

Plastic laminate is not a top choice from a health perspective. However, some options are better than others, so if you use it, make an informed choice. At a minimum, look for NAUF (No Added Urea Formaldehyde) products. If possible, take another step up by choosing products that are designated ULEF (Ultra Low Emitting Formaldehyde) or NAF (No Added Formaldehyde).

For more information, visit the [Countertop Product](#) page on HomeFree.

and narrowed our lens on a few things we could improve.”

HomeFree provided resources and support to focus on several materials of interest including insulation, flooring, and countertops. This helped the Liberty Bank project team, including architect Mithun and general contractor Walsh Construction Co., identify and understand chemicals of concern in the materials, and make informed choices based on HomeFree’s product hazard spectrums for flooring and countertops.

FLOORING

The strategy for reducing toxics in flooring incorporated multiple approaches, including substitution and elimination of products. Several alternatives were considered. Based on health concerns, the project team decided to eliminate carpet from the apartment bedrooms. The ground floor common area will have ground and polished concrete with no additional sealants.

Healthier flooring considered for the project included a laminate floating flooring that accommodated adhesive-free installation. Owing to budget and schedule, the team chose a new-formulation sheet vinyl—Armstrong Rejuvenations Sheet Vinyl, and luxury vinyl plank—Armstrong Vivero Best Luxury Vinyl Plank, that meet HomeFree recommendations to be free of ortho-phthalates, free of undisclosed recycled content, and that did not make health claims about antimicrobials.

COUNTERTOP

The base bid countertop, a plastic laminate material that included NAUF (No Added Urea Formaldehyde) wood products and Low or Zero VOC adhesives and sealants, was replaced with a healthier option, LG Hi-Macs, a solid surface material with a GreenGuard Gold certification, installed with Low or Zero VOC adhesive. An added health benefit of the solid surface material is that it does not require a surface sealer, which would need to be reapplied as an ongoing maintenance activity.

CHANGING PRACTICE

CHH’s participation in HomeFree inspired them to create a company-wide Capitol Hill Housing Healthy Homes Initiative. According to Blanch, the demonstration at Liberty Bank Building led to a larger effort across the organization. “A real benefit is the expansion of this partnership beyond Liberty Bank Building, being able to bring the lessons learned into new construction projects, but also across our operations—renovation, maintenance, and unit turns.”

To develop the initiative, CHH obtained a Washington State Department of Ecology Public Participation Grant, which will have a lasting impact, and lead to healthier homes and working conditions for residents and employees alike across its portfolio.

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.