

Community Preservation Committee 2022 OCT -7 A 10 18
Town of Belmont

CPA Funding - Preliminary Application

Ten copies of the completed Preliminary Application must be submitted to the following address by no later than 7:00PM on Monday, October 10, 2022:

Community Preservation Committee
c/o Matthew Haskell, CPA Administrator
Office of the Select Board Belmont
Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Unless an applicant can demonstrate that a significant opportunity would otherwise be lost, preliminary applications will not be accepted after the submission deadline.

Project Title: Predevelopment Planning for Rejuvenation of Sherman Gardens

Project Location: 131-135 Sycamore Street, Belmont, MA 02478 (Parcel ID: 28-101)

Applicant/Contact Person: Allison MacMartin, District Manager

Organization: Belmont Housing Authority

Mailing Address: 59 Pearson Road, Belmont, MA 02478

Telephone: 617-484- 2160 **E-mail:** amacmartin@cambridge-housing.org

Signature: Allison MacMartin **Date:** 10/7/22

CPA Category (refer to chart on the following page and check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |

Amount Requested: \$400,000

Total Project Cost: approximately \$85,000,000

Applicants will present their projects at the CPC Public Meeting on November 9, 2022 and address questions from Belmont residents. It is required that information about the project be in writing and copied for distribution and review at the Public Meeting. This is also an opportunity for project sponsors to ask the CPC any questions regarding the application process

Exhibit #1: Narrative Responses

Brief Description of Project - Include the address/location and current owner of the property, as well as any critical dates. Please attach supplemental information as desired

Sherman Gardens is a state public housing development composed of eighty (80) one-bedroom rental units for the elderly and persons with disabilities (Chapter 667). The property is owned by Belmont Housing Authority (BHA), and it is located at 131-135 Sycamore Street, Belmont, MA 02478 (Parcel ID: 28-101). Sherman Gardens was constructed in 1971. The community consists of six, two-story brick masonry buildings.

As demonstrated by the attached photographs and overview of current conditions (Exhibit #2), Sherman Gardens has significant capital needs. In addition to building systems and interiors that are original to the 1970s, the buildings are functionally ill-suited for their intended population of elderly and disabled residents. Specifically, half of the units in the garden apartment complex are accessed via stairs, posing a major architectural access barrier to residents and their ability to age in place.

This CPA application seeks development funding to support the redevelopment of Sherman Gardens. A funding award would build upon prior CPA allocations for this purpose made in fiscal year 2018 (\$173,200) and 2022 (\$400,000). These awards provided funding for consulting, feasibility analysis, architectural, and engineering work at Sherman Gardens. As described in the application for the 2022 CPA funding, the total anticipated predevelopment budget for Sherman Gardens is \$1.2 million. Predevelopment efforts are proceeding well, with a feasibility report scheduled for delivery to BHA in Q4 of 2022. This report will include architectural and site design concepts for consideration by BHA, including a mix of renovation and new construction to both preserve and expand Belmont's affordable housing stock. Simultaneously, a procurement process is beginning for survey and traffic study materials. After BHA and the Town's selection of a redevelopment concept, the BHA will go through the State's Designer Selection Process to retain an architectural and engineering firm as the project architect. Once the designer is selected, detailed architectural and engineering drawings will begin, as well as the community process associated with the zoning process.

The added \$400,000 is CPA funding requested in this application will further support design activities required for zoning approval which will make the project shovel ready. Both zoning approval and the Town's ongoing financial commitment will enhance BHA and the Town's ability to leverage funding from other entities, such as Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Massachusetts Housing Partnership, and DHCD. DHCD releases Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) at various times (most recently in July 2021 for public housing revitalization and August 2022 and September 2022 for new housing production) to support state public housing redevelopment and revitalization and new construction efforts. Moving forward with the design work in 2022-2023 to obtain zoning approval will position BHA to submit a compelling, fundable application for Sherman Gardens for future state public housing funding opportunities.

The overall \$1.2 million budget for predevelopment is as follows:

Predevelopment Funding Use	Cost	Funding Awarded To-Date
Preliminary architectural and engineering services through zoning/permitting	\$1,000,000	\$373,200
Misc. due diligence activities (geotech, traffic, environmental)	\$100,000	\$100,000
Additional development services	\$100,000	\$100,000
Total	\$1,200,000	\$573,200

BHA is working to secure \$626,800, balance of predevelopment funding need, through CEDAC, LISC, and/or PCI among others. The overall budget for the full redevelopment of Sherman Gardens is approximately \$85 million and will be funded through funding provided by DHCD, the low-income housing tax credit program, and conventional financing.

Brief Description of Benefit - How does the project fulfill the General and Specific Criteria of the Community Preservation Committee Guidelines?

The redevelopment of Sherman Gardens is anticipated to be a combination of new construction and renovation, which will both preserve and expand the stock of affordable rental housing in Belmont. Therefore, the project achieves multiple of the preferences for funding articulated in the Town of Belmont's *Community Preservation Plan* (2017; pages 7-8):

- **Demonstrate consistency with other current and widely scrutinized planning documents that have been adopted by the Town of Belmont.** Belmont has adopted multiple planning documents that emphasize the importance of producing and preserving affordable housing. Notably, the *Town of Belmont Comprehensive Plan: 2010-2020* (2010; page 50) includes providing "affordable housing options for young families and the aging" as a goal. *Belmont's Housing Future: Housing Production Plan* (2018; pages 34, 41) recommends creating affordable housing options for seniors and highlights Sherman Gardens as an important site for development.
- **Benefit a currently under-served population** – There is currently an acute need for housing that serves low-income and elderly households in Belmont. According to the American Community Survey (2020 5-Year Estimates) median monthly housing cost (\$2,272) in the Town has risen 34% over the past decade. This median housing cost is a burden (greater than 30% of income) to households earning less than \$90,880. Over 2,900 households in Belmont (29.7% of all households) experience such a housing cost burden, yet little new affordable housing is being built. In 2018, the *Housing Production Plan* assumed that the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) was effectively 675 units (6.67% of all housing). As of December 21, 2020 the SHI stands at 661 units (6.5% of all housing), indicating that there may have been a small net loss of affordable units in 2019-2020.
- **Leverage additional public and/or private funds** – Investment in Sherman Gardens' predevelopment will prepare the project for when DHCD next releases a NOFA for state public housing revitalization. For example, a state public housing project in Medford that is similar to Sherman Gardens received predevelopment funding through the CPA process, in a comparable fashion to this proposal. That project was recently awarded \$15 million in DHCD capital grant funding through the Public Housing Innovations Demonstration Program.

Within the Community Housing category of the Community Preservation Plan (2017; pages 18-19), Sherman Gardens directly addresses specific criteria. A recommend area of focus for Community Housing investment is working "with the Belmont Housing Trust and Belmont Housing Authority to assist with the creation of affordable and/or community housing." Additionally, a selection criterion is that the project should "assist in the financing or construction of new affordable housing, especially on multi-family rental sites." The rejuvenation of Sherman Gardens is a priority project for the Belmont Housing Authority, as well as the Town of Belmont. It has the potential to guarantee continued affordable housing for 80 extremely low-income households and to create new units of deeply affordable housing, which will benefit the Town for decades to come.

Exhibit #2
Existing Conditions Assessment and Photographs

Building and Site Assessment

The construction of Sherman Gardens Apartments was completed in 1971. The site is located in the Waverly Square section of Belmont near the Waverley MBTA Commuter Rail and bus stops and within a commercial area with easy access to the Beaver Brook Reservation, an active and passive recreation open space. The site is approx. 80,000 s.f., and it includes 6 separate buildings with a total of 80 one-bedroom housing units and a stand-alone community center.

The Belmont Housing Authority has been a good steward of Sherman Gardens over the years, and the property is in relatively good condition considering its age. However, there are signs of deterioration. Nearly everything is original from the time the units were built, with few exceptions. The units are small and would benefit from additional storage space. 40 of the 80 units are “walk-ups” located on a second floor; the apartments are not fully accessible to people with disabilities and the elderly.

The consultant team gathered the following information after a walk-through of one of the units as well as speaking to the property management team. The site was visited on March 13, 2019.

Windows:

The most apparent signs of deterioration are in and surrounding the windows. All windows observed are the original windows, dated from 1971. They are single pane, uninsulated, double-hung windows. These do not meet current energy codes. On the interior, the wood window sills have a continuous, unsealed gap. Sealant around exterior of windows shows signs of deterioration. The exterior steel lintels are rusted in several locations.



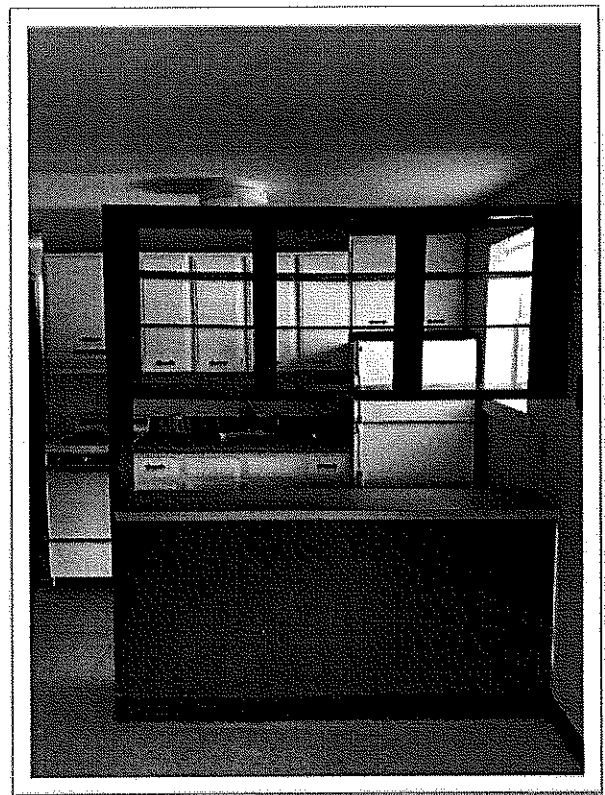
Flooring:

According to the property's original construction drawings, vinyl asbestos tiles were used throughout the property as flooring. The unit observed for this report had newer VCT flooring material in place. However, it is not clear whether the original asbestos floor tile has been replaced throughout the property. Any original, unsealed flooring in apartment units should be replaced.



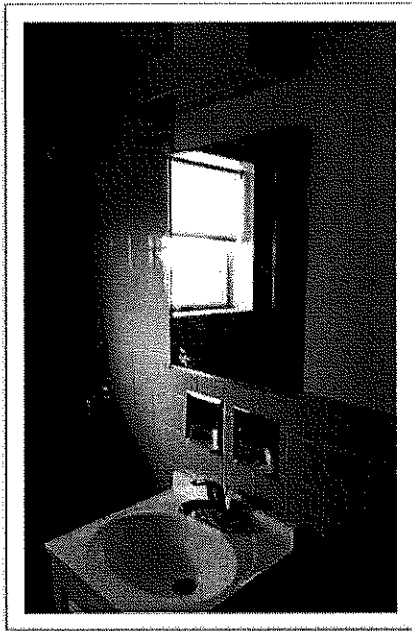
Main Area:

The apartments have a combined kitchen and living room space. A counter and shelving (shown) separate the two. There are signs of water leakage from deformed paint. There is bubbling and chipped paint primarily around windows. All kitchen cabinets appear to be original.



Bathrooms:

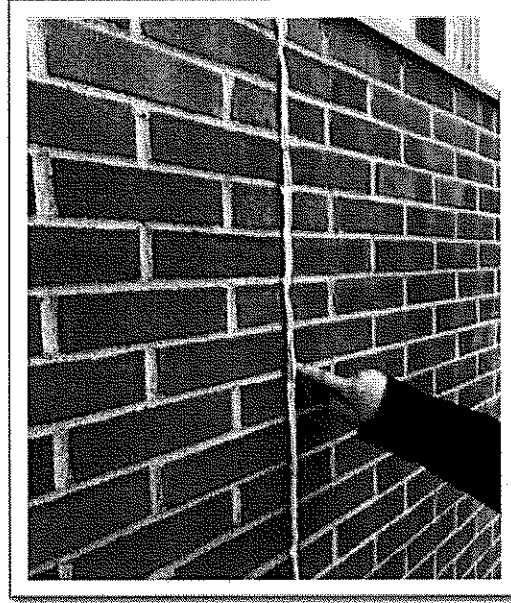
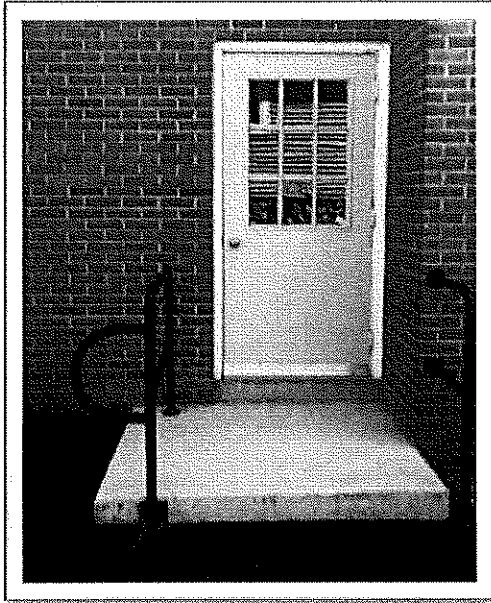
Bathroom tiles and fixtures are all original except for the sink. There are signs of water damage around tub.



Entrances and Exterior:

Entrances do not meet current accessibility standards. There are stairs or steps approaching every unit with no alternative. Some work has been done to address railings that have rusted to the point that they were loose and did not provide support. Doors are original and do not meet current code requirements. Some show severe deterioration. Exterior expansion joint sealant has failed and should be replaced.





It appears that some on the new landings at the rear egress of buildings are several inches below the door threshold. Per the MA state building code, IBC 1010.1.5: *there shall be a floor or landing on each side of a door. Such floor or landing shall be at the same elevation on each side of the door.*

Summary of building assessment:

There are signs of deterioration throughout the property. Considering most everything is original, deterioration is expected. However, there are several issues that present code or safety issues and must be addressed. These include the inefficient windows, failed joint sealant and inaccessibility. Furthermore, our conversation with the maintenance staff revealed that some floors have settled. The fire alarms and smoke detectors are present in every room and appear to be functioning. Note, only one unit was able to be observed.

