



Waltham Alliance For Teaching, Community Organizing and Housing

24 CRESCENT STREET, SUITE 201 | WALTHAM, MA 02453
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To: Justin Barrett, Chair
Waltham Community Preservation Committee
119 School Street
Waltham, MA 02451

August 5, 2019

Dear Justin,

Please find attached our application for CPC funding for a feasibility study for determining if the Waltham State Armory is an appropriate site for the development of affordable housing.

We know that the CPC is committed to meeting the minimum requirement for community housing and we believe this proposal is a good fit for helping achieve that goal.

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you and the committee in the future and look forward to answering your questions and hearing your input. I understand the Committee does not have a regularly scheduled meeting until September. If it is possible to get a quorum of members to meet in August to vote on this proposal, that would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Daria Gere
Executive Director, WATCH CDC

CC: Julie Toole

Waltham CPC Community Housing Application

8/5/19

Section 1 Applicant/Developer Information

- **Contact Person/Primary Applicant:** Daria Gere, Executive Director
- **Organization:** WATCH CDC
- **Co-Applicant:** N/A
- **Owner of Project:** Heritage Hall LLC, 110 Stuart Street-Unit 26b, Boston, MA 02116
- **Mailing Address:** 24 Crescent Street, Suite 201, Waltham, MA 02453
- **Daytime Phone:** 781-891-6689x200
- **Email Address:** daria@watchcdc.org
- **Fax Number:** 781-891-1703
- **Developer:** N/A
- **Developer Mailing Address:** N/A
- **Developer daytime phone:** N/A
- **Developer email address:** N/A
- **Developer fax number:** N/A

Section 2 Project Information

- **Project Name:** Waltham State Armory Feasibility Study
- **Address of Project:** Curtis and Sharon Street, Waltham, MA
- **Assessors Parcel ID:** R068 014 0003
- **Type of CPA-funded project:** Rehabilitation/Restoration and Support
- **Brief Project Description:** The Waltham State Armory is currently for sale. We are requesting \$30,000 to complete a feasibility study that would provide a structural assessment of the Waltham State Armory and cost estimates of rehabilitating and converting the structure into affordable housing. Moreover, the study will assess the optimal number of units in the building, the size of the units, and parking options.
- **Project Funding:** \$30,000
- **Type of Housing:** N/A
- **Units of Housing:** N/A

Section 3 Site Information

- **Lot size:** 0.66 acres of land and 7,962 square feet of the structure
- **Zoning Districts:** N/A
- **Ward:** 9
- **Zoning:** Zoned for Residence B
- **Environmental:** N/A
- **How old is the existing building?** 111 years
- **Are there (will there be) children under the age of seven living on premise?** N/A
- **Dislocation:** No
- **Historic:** National Register of Historic Places

Section 4 Project Schedule: Feasibility study to be conducted between August and September 2019

Section 5 Financing and Operating Budget

- **Project Budget:** The following estimates are based on initial consultation with Jennifer Van Campen from Metrowest CD based off of industry experience.

Category	Expenses
Environmental	\$5,000
Engineering	\$15,000
Architectural	\$5,000
Financial Feasibility	\$5,000
Total	\$30,000

- **Capital Needs Assessment:** N/A
- **City of Waltham Assessors Property Appraisal and Data:** Data from most recent numbers on Waltham Assessor's Database.

Building Value	\$133,100
Land Value	\$620,000
Total Value	\$753,100

- **Proof of Financial Commitment:** N/A

Section 6 Project Description

- **Goals:**

WATCH is committed to promoting affordable housing in Waltham and we aim to determine the feasibility of using the Waltham State Armory for the development of new affordable housing. The Waltham State Armory, which has been abandoned for decades, is a liability for the neighborhood. In 2017, a Waltham police officer fell through the floor of the building, sending him to the hospital¹. We want to address this liability and convert the building into a community asset by addressing the needs for affordable housing while preserving and protecting a historical landmark. This feasibility study will explore the potential of the property for this purpose and establish a design and initial project budget for the main goal of developing new affordable housing options.

- **Community Need and Community Support:**

Recent housing data reveals a need for more affordable housing options in Waltham. As of 2016, there were 900 units available for families in the 30% income bracket (local AMI) but 3,705 families in this housing bracket. Additionally, only 1,895 units were available for the 50% income bracket, leaving a housing deficit of 275 units. This shortage of housing demonstrates the pressing need for increased affordable housing options.² Based on the findings of the feasibility study, the Armory could be restored as a new affordable housing option for Waltham residents by adding permanently affordable units.

The inadequate supply of affordable housing for low-income families is among the most prevalent community health concern related to housing. If a family cannot afford to pay rent, they are forced to divert their resources from other necessities, such as food, clothing, and healthcare. Families who cannot afford housing will be driven away from Waltham and lose contact with family members and important community resources that Waltham specifically provides. A lack of affordable housing can result in residential instability, overcrowding, and homelessness.

In addition to the need for more affordable housing options in Waltham, the community's persistent interest in and support for past affordable housing projects including the inclusionary zoning law and public hearings related to affordable housing suggest widespread support for inquiries into converting existing properties into affordable housing. Furthermore, WATCH held a community meeting about the Armory property where most neighbors were in support for a feasibility study. Based on our recent canvassing efforts in the neighborhood, there is widespread support for this initiative. Of the 23 households we spoke to in the surrounding area of the Amory, 74% were in favor of it being used for affordable housing.

- **Credentials:**

WATCH CDC has been working for 31 years in Waltham to serve the needs of low-income renters in Waltham. WATCH has developed 34 units of affordable housing and partners with Brandeis University to provide a free walk-in housing clinic. Twice a week this clinic assists Waltham renters by resolving disputes with landlords, addressing unsafe living conditions, providing education to renters on their rights as tenants, and applying for services and affordable/public housing, fuel assistance, food stamps, and other resources. WATCH is a Community Development Corporation certified under MGL chapter 40H. (www.macdc.org/certified-cdcs)

- **Success Factors:**

The Waltham State Armory feasibility project will be measured by the following:

- Clear understanding of the appropriateness of the Armory for affordable housing.
- Clear understanding of the costs associated with transforming the Armory into affordable housing units

- **Maintenance:** N/A

- **Additional Info:**

History

The Waltham State Armory, otherwise known as Company F State Armory, was built in 1908 and designed by Hartwell, Richardson, and Driver³. As the only Armory building in the city, this property plays a significant role in the history of Waltham. The building is now listed under the National Register of Historic Places and was sold in 2014 to Heritage Hall LLC⁴. The property was sold by the State in 2004 and has been vacant for several years.

Unfriendly 40B

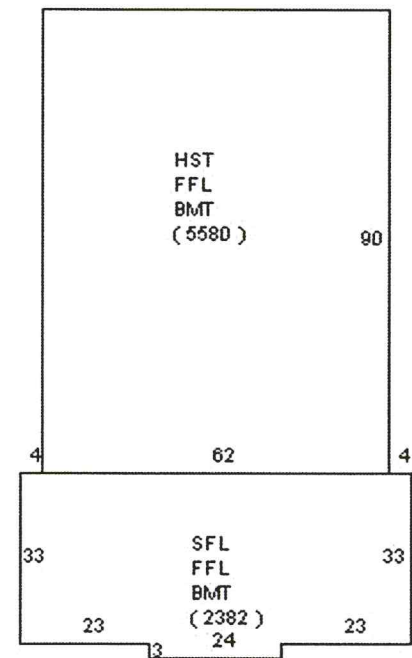
Due to the lack of affordable housing in Waltham there is a risk of unfriendly 40 B projects. The Waltham State Armory Feasibility Project aims to protect against an unfriendly 40 B on this property by proactively pursuing a project in which 100% of the units will be affordable.

- **Other City Agencies:** N/A
- **Combination Community Housing/Community Preservation Projects:** N/A
- **Leveraged Additional Benefits:** N/A

Present Day Armory (Assessors Database)



Square Footage of the Armory



Past Sketch for Consideration of Armory Rehabilitation

Green= Double Occup.
Red= Single Occup.

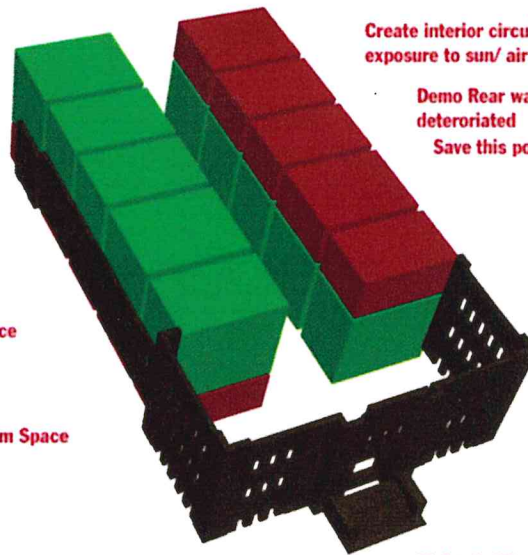
Create interior circulation to increase exposure to sun/ air

Demo Rear wall, this is the most deteriorated
Save this portion of envelope

Possible Storage Space
Below Hall

Possible Museum Space

Maintain "Face" of building



¹ [Waltham police officer falls in armory](#)

² [City of Waltham Consolidated Plan 2016-2019](#)

³ [National Register of Historic Places](#)

⁴ [Waltham police officer falls in armory](#)