

# THE WINSLOW

## Building

Thursday, May 31, 2012 — The Winslow — The Recorder, Greenfield, Mass.



## Recreating Affordable Housing

An Advertising Supplement to The Recorder

MAY 31, 2012



JOHN P. COUNTER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*Dear Winslow Friend;*

The Winslow Apartment complex has been a major fixture in Greenfield dating back to 1865. It has been a place to worship, support community dinners and food drives as the Baptist Church from 1865 – 1913. The Winslow housed entertainment for Greenfield residents as the Bijou Theatre from 1913 – 1917 then was converted into residential, commercial and professional office space in 1917 as The Benson Block. The residential space was named “Mohawk Chambers” and was intended to house the transient population that from the automotive industry would “overrun our town”. By 1926 the property was sold and became the Hotel Winslow as was marketed as “A handy overnight stop for the tourist between New York & the White Mts”. By the early 1960’s it was sold and renamed the “Harco Rooms” and the owners provided a \$5.00 maid service for those who could afford it.

Today, as you know “The Winslow” offers 55 units of single room occupancy (SRO). The project involved some nine different funding sources. These public and private partnerships were critical in financing this project. Today, The Winslow building is listed on the Historical Building Register and houses some of Greenfield’s most valuable residents. Your efforts in reaching this final goal ensures the Winslow will continue to impact the Greenfield community as a positive real estate investment.

On behalf of the Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc. Board of Directors, staff and residents, we thank you, Town of Greenfield, for such a warm welcome.

*Sincerely,*

John P. Counter  
Executive Director  
Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc.

# The Winslow: A cornerstone of downtown

By MICHAEL REARDON  
Special to The Recorder

**T**he renovation of the Winslow Building has a number of benefits not just for its residents, but also for the town of Greenfield.

What was once a rundown rooming house catering to a clientele of male-only tenants is now a bright, clean, attractive cornerstone of the downtown. Although the building's 55 rooms are still mostly occupied by men, about a dozen women call the Winslow home, as well.

There are strict requirements to become a Winslow Building tenant, including an extensive background check. Anyone who wants to live in the building must be elderly, disabled, or participate in a social service like working toward obtaining a G.E.D. or job training program.

The renovation of the building has put a new face on a corner of Main Street that had fallen badly into disrepair and disrepute.

"The project was a win-win," said John Cariddi, former Greenfield Housing Authority executive director who headed up the Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc., the private non-profit organization that oversaw the project. "The building got renovated and is now up to current building codes and safety standards. The building stayed on the tax rolls. The tenants have an affordable place to live and more disposable income to spend with downtown merchants."

The project might never have come to fruition but for a savvy move on the part of newly elected Mayor William Martin in 2009. "I had just been elected and the (federal) stimulus funds were about to be prioritized for projects in Massachusetts," recalls Martin, "and we were not very high on the list. So John (Cariddi) had the idea, and I checked it out and it seemed to be proper. What I did was authorize the building



MARTIN



The Wells Street entrance to The Winslow at the corner of Main and Wells streets in Greenfield. The renovation of the building has put a new face on the east corner of Main Street.

Recorder/Paul Franz

inspector to issue a building permit, conditioned on payment, knowing that ... whoever was going to provide the financing would guarantee that the building permit was paid for. So that's what we did, and John revised the project with the state. It moved the project up quite a few rungs of the ladder and within a month the governor called and congratulated us. They awarded the funds and the project took off.

"It's a pleasure to see continued work done on the Main Street properties, from the Common to the extensions of Main Street both east and west."

For years, the Winslow Building was rundown and was considered nothing more than a flophouse. Many of the windows, which dated from 1935, were rotting. Of the dozen bathrooms in the building, only four were working.

John Counter, Greenfield Housing Authority and Greenfield Housing Associates executive director characterized the building as "just above dilapidated"

before the renovations.

"In the private market, this project would have been impossible to do," he said. "The building was close to being on its last legs."

The subsequent renovation transformed the building inside and out.

Where bathrooms were previously shared, now every apartment has a private bathroom fitted with new fixtures, a kitchen with new cabinets and appliances, a living area, and storage space. On the third floor, there's a community room and kitchen for functions and meetings. A laundry room is on the second floor, as well as free office space for social services agencies to meet with clients who live in the building.

A natural gas heating system replaced an old, inefficient oil unit. Although the renovation brought the building into compliance with building and safety codes, inside it also retains much of its historical character, including tin ceilings, plaster walls, and original stairwells. Outside the facade was refurbished to reflect the building's historical character.

"There's no question this project has had a positive impact on the town," Counter said. "It provides two commercial spaces for Main Street businesses,

Magical Child and Lucky Nails. Their spaces were renovated as part of the project, too. There's always value taken when you can maintain the historical integrity of a Main Street facade."

See CORNERSTONE on Page 8

“  
There's no questions this project has had a positive impact on the town.”



John Counter

Greenfield Housing Authority executive dir.

”

# Salvage project began with a vision

## Historic building reborn as affordable housing

By MICHAEL REARDON  
Special to The Recorder

**F**or John Cariddi, the timing seemed to be right to take over the Winslow Building, then known as the HARCO Rooms, when he walked through it in 2005 with real estate consultant Austin Miller of MBL Housing and Development of Springfield.

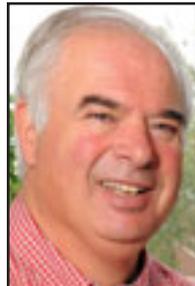
The owner, Richard Braff, was looking to sell the property and retire; Paul Douglas of Rural Development, Inc. of Turners Falls considered taking on the project of rehabilitating the building, but he was too busy at the time. Instead, Douglas approached Cariddi to see if he would be interested.

At the time, Cariddi was executive director of the Greenfield Housing Authority, and was also executive director of Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc. (GHAI). The Housing Associates was formed in 1988 to take on projects that required a certain type of funding that was unavailable to the Housing Authority.

The 38-unit rooming house was in poor condition, with several problems including a leaky roof, which caused some tenants to be evacuated to the Salvation Army for shelter. Water damage made two rooms uninhabitable. There were no private baths and the shared bathrooms were in various states of disrepair and outdated. None of the rooms had kitchens.

"It was a dismal piece of property at the time," said Christine Forgey, who was Greenfield mayor when the project was first proposed.

Despite the condition, Cariddi thought the building would be sal-



CARIDDI



Recorder file photo/Paul Franz

## Before and after

**Above:** An old room at the former Harco. There were no private baths and the shared bathrooms were in various states of disrepair and outdated. None of the rooms had kitchens.

**Below:** Dan Finn, assistant executive director of the Greenfield Housing Authority, stands in one of the newly renovated rooms. Now, every apartment has a private bathroom fitted with new fixtures, a kitchen with new cabinets and appliances, a living area and storage space.



vageable.

"The reason I thought the project was viable was because I believed it would be attractive to the funders because it would be affordable for single people whether they were retired, disabled or the working poor; it would help those at risk of becoming homeless, and it is located downtown and close to services, Cariddi said. "Prior to this, the building only served men. Now, it serves men and women."

at MBL, Tillman Lucas to complete the project.

Besides MBL Housing and Development, others that worked with the GHAI to make the project come to fruition included Blackstone Block Architects of Boston, historical consultant Agricola Corp. of Chicopee, and general contractor Saloomey Construction, Inc. of Otis.

The original four-story building, located on the corner of Main and Wells streets, underwent a top-to-bottom historic rehabilitation. Work on the project began in January 2009 and was completed in December 2011. When it was done, the building was rehabilitated and expanded to provide 55 affordable rental units for single adults.

During the renovation project, the 38 units were reduced to 35 with private baths and small kitchens. A two-story addition was constructed in the rear parking lot of the building, which added 20 new units.

The rehabilitation of the building included the replacement of the roof, HVAC and electrical systems, plumbing and insulation, façade repair, a reconfiguration of the interior to create space for kitchens and bathrooms in each room, creation of a community room with kitchen and bathroom, and offices for social services agencies.

The individual studio units include a kitchen with refrigerator and cook-top burners and private bathrooms. The building is air conditioned, handicapped accessible, and non-smoking. In addition to the community room with kitchen, the building also has a common laundry room, bicycle rack, and mail boxes in the lobby. Several security measures have been taken, including a doorbell intercom system, proximity key cards to enter the building and apartments, surveillance cameras, and lighted parking lot.

An elevator connects the existing building and the new addition.

"This is decent, safe and sanitary housing," said John Counter, Greenfield Housing Authority and GHAI executive director.

Added Dan Finn, GHA assistant executive director, "it's a place you can call home."

Continued on page 5

# ■ Vision: (Now) ‘it’s a place you can call home’ — Finn

From Page 4

The Greenfield Housing Authority manages the property for GHAI, which includes selecting tenants, collecting rent, and making repairs. All prospective tenants must undergo a criminal background check. Single working individuals must enroll in a supportive service program that will eventually lead them toward self-sufficiency/financial independence. The programs fall under six categories, which include family self-sufficiency, education related to economic development, English as a Second Language (ESL), General Educational Development (GED), matching residents with economic or job opportunities, and a Tenant’s Association.

Offices were created at the Winslow so social service agencies can meet with clients onsite.

Renovation of the building was also a historical preservation project.

Greg Farmer, of the Agricola Corporation, was hired as a historical consultant to help obtain

tax credits available to national historical preservation projects. He did so by applying to have the building listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the threshold to obtain state and federal historic preservation tax credit.

“A building that is in poor shape can be rehabbed using this tax credit,” Farmer said. “That was the case with the Winslow Building. We retained a lot of the historical material. On the outside of the building, brickwork was repainted, cornices were repaired, storefronts were returned to their historic configuration, signage was redone to complement the building, and windows were replaced with windows that were a close historic match.”

#### Historic touches retained

Inside the building, historic touches like tin ceilings were retained, while staircases, plaster walls, and trim around doors were restored.

“We selected colors and floor patterns that were compatible with the historic character of the building,” Farmer added.

#### Kudos

Cariddi gives a great amount of credit to the team that made this project a reality. Besides the consultants, architect, and contractor, he said others who offered support or who made significant contributions to the project include Forgey, current Mayor William Martin, former state Representative Christopher Donelan, Senator Stanley Rosenberg, Roseann Martoccia, executive director of Franklin County Home Care Corp.; Rick Willhite of ServiceNet; Peter Miller, local historian; Ellen Campbell former head of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program; Judy Hastings, former director of housing management; Evelyn Walsh, former GHA director of finance and her successor Maggie Padilla; and Finn, who was head of the Section 8 program before

becoming GHA assistant executive director.

But, others are quick to give Cariddi the lion’s share of the credit for his vision and commitment to the project.

“This was John’s project,” Forgey said. “The person I most associate with the successful day-to-day agenda is John. He made sure all of the pieces were moving together. If he was not there, the project would not have gotten done. It was a monumental effort.”

Cariddi calls the project a “win-win” for the town and residents.

“The project saved the building, it’s safe because it complies with current building codes, it provides affordable housing, and it’s on the tax rolls,” he said. “Property taxes on the building have quadrupled since the renovation. And because the residents have subsidized rent, they have more disposable income to spend.”

# CONGRATULATIONS



## General Contractor

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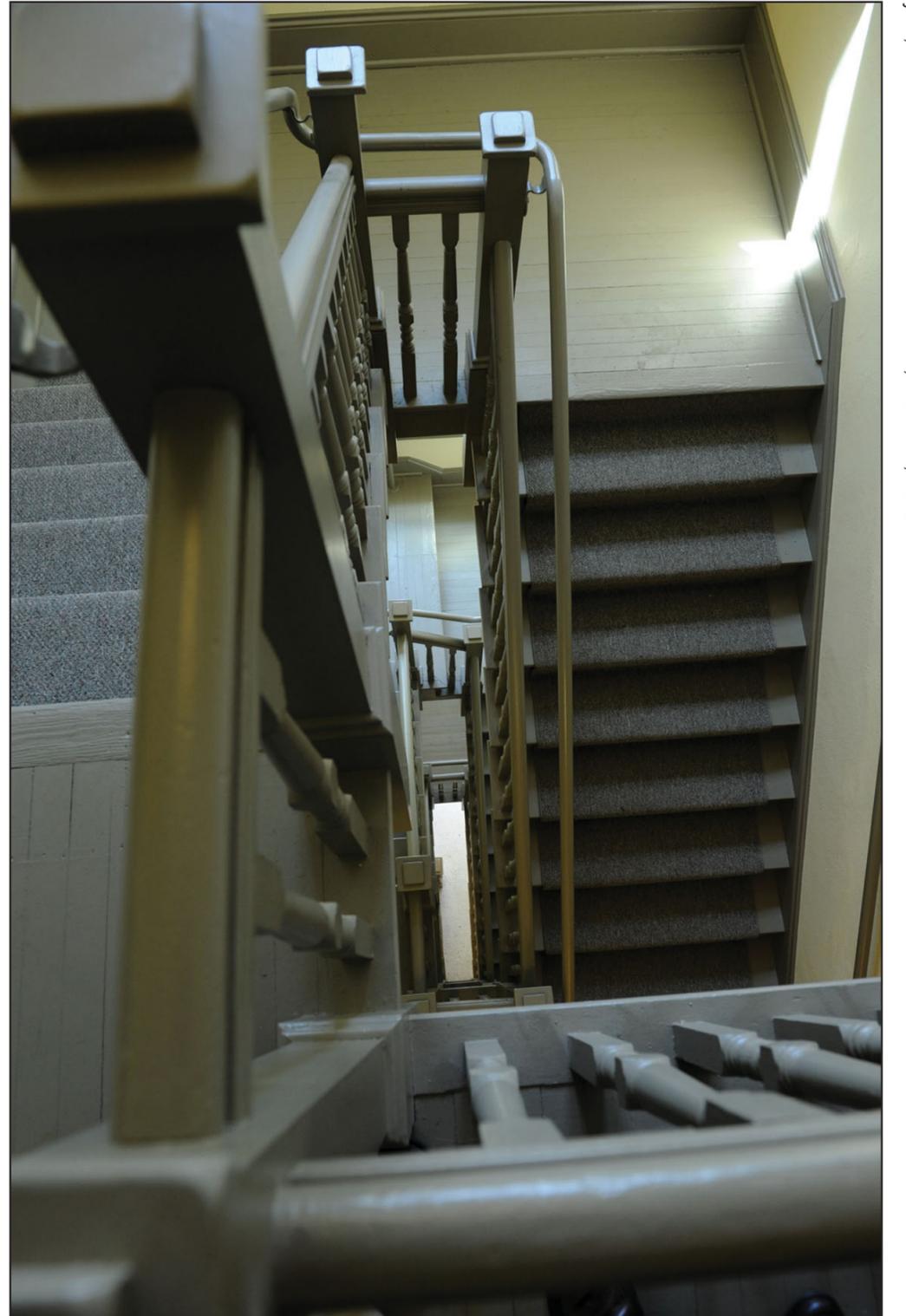
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# SENSITIVE RESTORATION SALVAGES PERIOD ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS



Recorder photos by Paul Franz

Although the renovation brought The Winslow into compliance with building and safety codes, inside, it retains much of its historical character, including decorative tin ceilings, trim around doors, window transoms, plaster walls, period light fixtures in the hallways and original stairwells. On the outside of the building, brickwork was repainted, cornices repaired, storefronts returned to their historic configuration; signage was redone to complement the building and windows were replaced with windows that were a close historic match. Colors and floor patterns that were compatible with the historic character of the building were selected.



# Since 1917: Hotel, theater, retail

By MICHAEL REARDON  
Special to The Recorder

**A** 1930 newspaper advertisement stated the Hotel Winslow was a “moderately priced, centrally located hotel on the main route to the Mohawk Trail,” and was “a handy overnight stop between New York and the White Mtns.”

The Hotel Winslow was an important stop for sightseeing and business motorists in the town that was a hub of transportation in the area. But, before and since then, the building was used not just for housing, and was known by other names. The Winslow was built on the site of a church and subsequently housed the Bijou Theater, and other stores and businesses before being torn down to make room for the current building.

The Winslow Building underwent a two year renovation and construction and opened earlier this year for low income tenants.

“The building was in rough shape when we bought it,” said John Cariddi, who spearheaded the project when he was executive director of Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc., owners of the Winslow Building. “The electrical system had to be replaced. All of the bathrooms had to be renovated.”

The site where the Winslow Building currently stands was originally the Baptist church from 1865 to 1913. The Bijou Theater then moved in on the second floor and a fish market and two other commercial ven-

tures operated on the first floor.

In addition to the Bijou Theater, by 1916, the building housed Cummings and Company millinery, Bijou Cigar Store and Bijou Candy Kitchen. The theater closed that same year.

In 1917, the building as it exists today was constructed by W. Edward Benson at Main and Wells streets and was known as Mohawk Chambers. The building housed Benson’s real estate business and other office space on the second floor, and had three businesses on the first floor, one of which was Mohawk Chocolate. The top two floors of the four story building were given over to two room suites with private baths. A newspaper article about the opening of Mohawk Chambers stated the suites would “help the congestion when the town is overrun with transients, as is often the case.”

By the following year, Mohawk Chambers included businesses such as Mohawk Chocolate, West Side News, and Streeter Electric Company.

In 1927, the building became known as the Hotel Winslow, with Sarah P. Bates as proprietor and manager.

At around 3:30 a.m. on May 2, 1939, the Hotel Winslow caught fire, causing the evacuation of 70 people. The fire started in the basement and travelled upward through the building. Firefighting crews from Turners Falls and Amherst were needed to help put the blaze out. It took firefighters four hours to douse the fire, which caused \$50,000 worth of damage.

In the 1940s, the building was

known as the Stearns Hotel, owned by J. Howard Stearns. In May 1950, Stearns sold the hotel to Harry and Eva Cologny, who renamed it HARCO Rooms. In 1965, Richard Braff bought the property and retained the HARCO Rooms name.

In 2007, the Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc., a private, non-profit organization, bought the building from Braff for \$550,000 and set about the process of renovating it for affordable housing.

Construction began in January 2009. The project, which included the renovation of 35 apartments in the Winslow Building and construction of 20 new apartments to the back of the building on Wells Street, cost \$5.9 million.

Funds for the project came from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Tax Credit Assistance Program and implemented by the state Department of Housing and Community Development.



## Tale of two facades

The renovation of the Winslow Building has put a new face on the corner of Main and Wells streets. The building’s two storefronts were returned to their historic configuration, including new signage. Photos at left show the old (top) and new (bottom) look of the Lucky Nails Salon.

Recorder photos



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## Cornerstone: A facelift

From Page 3

Former State Representative Christopher J. Donelan believes the renovation of the Winslow Building benefits the surrounding architecture, as well.

“Anytime you can do a renovation like that it benefits all of the buildings on Main Street,” he said. “It’s kind of like a facelift for the whole street.”

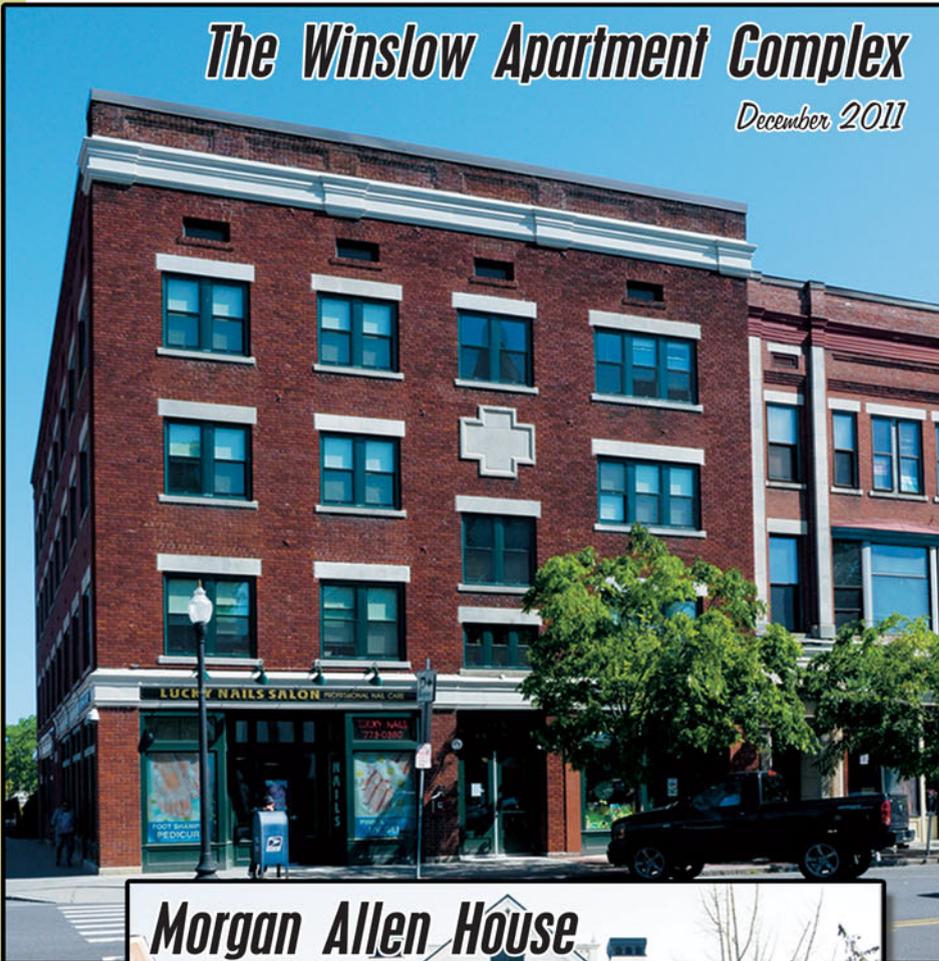
Roseann Martoccia, vice president of the Greenfield Housing

Associates board of directors, said it was important to increase affordable housing in the community, as well as preserve a historical downtown building.

“Given its location downtown, the renovation and expansion has really increased the Winslow Building’s look and presence in the community,” she said. “It will be an important part of the increased vitality of the downtown.”

## *The Winslow Apartment Complex*

*December 2011*



*The Greenfield Housing Authority was created in 1946. We are the largest landlord of affordable housing in Greenfield. We are excited to add "The Winslow" as the latest addition of our portfolio.*

## *Housing for Special Needs*

*1979*



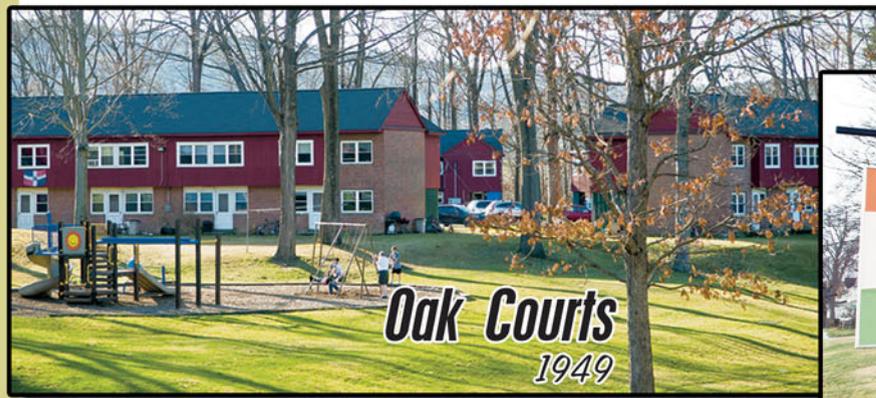
## *Morgan Allen House*



*Built in 1816  
Purchased in 1986*

## *Sullivan Lane*

*1990*

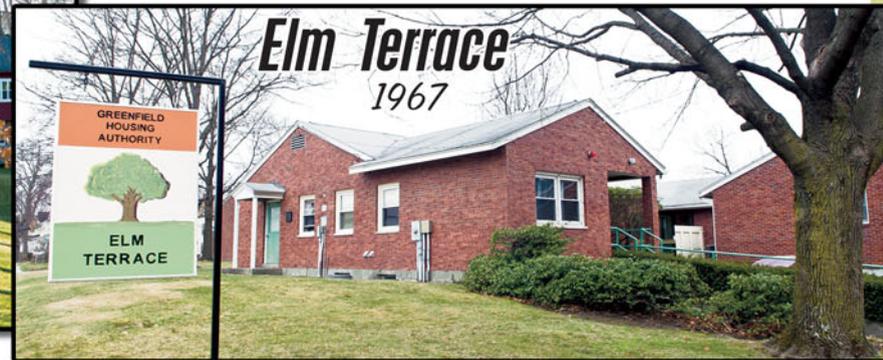


## *Oak Courts*

*1949*

## *Elm Terrace*

*1967*



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# Innovative housing meets dual needs

Not only provides a place to live, but supportive services to move residents toward self-sufficiency

By MICHAEL REARDON  
Special to The Recorder

**J**ohn Counter, executive director of the Greenfield Housing Authority, the agency that manages the Winslow Building, said when he came to the GHA in 2010 to take over for retiring John Cariddi, the first housing-related issue he read about concerned “The Jungle,” an area by the railroad tracks adjacent to downtown where homeless people slept in tents and lean-tos.

With Franklin County the poorest county in the state, it hit home to Counter that there was a massive affordable housing problem in Greenfield and beyond.

“There is a high percentage of single people who are homeless,” Counter said.

The newly renovated Winslow Building is fully occupied and has a waiting list, evidence that there was and is a need for affordable housing in the area. Cariddi said the emphasis in recent years has been on the homeless and the prevention of homelessness, as opposed to more traditional elderly and family affordable housing.

In 1988, Cariddi was among a group that founded Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc. (GHAI), a private nonprofit, to pursue affordable housing opportunities that the Greenfield Housing Authority, as a public nonprofit, was unable to.

The residents of the Winslow are low income men and women, some formerly homeless, who have fallen on hard times.

“The Winslow Building was essentially an opportunity pre-

sented to the GHAI as a vehicle to provide affordable housing,” Cariddi said. “Most of the original residents of the building were elderly, disabled, or single working poor. Most of them would, in all likelihood, be one paycheck away from being homeless themselves. This is the only facility of its kind to offer assistance to single, working poor individuals.”

Former Greenfield Mayor Christine Forgey said Governor Deval Patrick’s administration was promoting initiatives to tackle the issues of homelessness and affordable housing, which fit nicely with what the GHAI was trying to accomplish with the development of the Winslow Building.

“There was a huge need to address these issues,” Forgey said. “John was a main force behind this in Greenfield. He understood that there was a huge need and how precious affordable housing is and for single room occupiers.”

In order to move into the Winslow, people other than the elderly or disabled are required to sign a contract stating they will participate in a supportive service program that will move them toward self-sufficiency, such as an English as a second language course, college courses, earn their GED, job training, or other programs. The Winslow has office space for service agencies to meet privately with residents.

“While there were programs in the past to help the elderly and disabled, this was an opportunity to assist single, working poor individuals if they would enter into a contract whereby they would strive to become financially self sufficient through an assortment of training or education programs,” Cariddi said. “No

“  
**This is the only facility of its kind to offer assistance to single, working poor individuals.**  
”

**John Cariddi**  
retired director, GHA



Recorder file photo

A two-story addition was constructed in the rear parking lot of the former Harco Rooms, which added 20 new units, for a total of 55 affordable rental units for single adults. An elevator connects the existing building and the addition.



other program provides this opportunity as does the Section 8 program’s supportive service component. GHAI received the Section 8 funding as a result of a successful application to the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). The HRA also provided tax credit counseling services to the GHAI during the development process. Also, this may be the only facility in the state to offer this site-specific program.”

Elderly or disabled residents are not required to participate in supportive service programs.

Income levels cannot exceed \$34,500 for residents. But, because rents are subsidized,

even these low-income residents have more disposable income to spend in downtown stores and other businesses.

Roseann Martoccia, vice president of the Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc, said the Winslow provides residents with much needed affordable housing that is safe and secure, as well as close to essential amenities, such as public transportation and shopping.

“Housing is an expensive item for many people,” she said. “Affordable housing is in especially short supply. The expansion of the units in the building increases the amount of affordable housing in the community.”

# Resident finds safety, stability at Winslow

By MICHAEL REARDON  
Special to The Recorder

**W**hat Joannah Whitney loves most about living at the Winslow

Building is the privacy.

After spending more than a year living in rehabilitation facilities and with friends following surgery, Whitney is happy she has a place of her own where she can write her poetry and enjoy peace and quiet.

"I really love being able to shut the door, lock it, and have nobody come in," she said. "When you're in the hospital and at a rehab facility, you have no privacy."

Whitney, who uses a wheelchair, moved into the Winslow Building in February. She had been living in Shutesbury, but let the lease expire after it became clear her recovery and rehabilitation from her August 2010 surgery would last much

longer than she anticipated.

"When I had surgery, I thought I would be in the hospital for a week or two," Whitney said.

Once Whitney recovered enough, the next challenge was to find housing. She worked with a social worker to find a residence that was handicapped accessible and affordable. The social worker suggested the recently renovated Winslow Building.

"I needed a place that could accommodate a wheelchair," Whitney said. "We went and looked at one of the handicapped accessible units. By the time I moved in, it was clear this was the place I could function in."

Since moving in, Whitney, 52, has found that the Greenfield Housing Authority, which manages the building, has been very helpful in making adjustments to the apartment to make her even more comfortable, including installing an extra grab bar in the bathroom to help her from her wheelchair. GHA Executive Director John Counter even came

by to shovel snow so she could get to her car.

"Anytime I needed something, it was addressed promptly," Whitney said.

The studio apartment has a kitchen, a bathroom, and an area that doubles as a bedroom and living room.

"Whoever did the design was clearly thinking about making the space large enough for somebody in a wheelchair to get around comfortably," Whitney said. "In a conventional space, getting around can be difficult."

Whitney particularly likes the spacious bathroom with its roll-in shower. She can walk a bit, so she can roll her wheelchair up to the shower and walk in without the fear of slipping and falling.

"The bathroom is awesome," Whitney said. "Most bathrooms are very small."

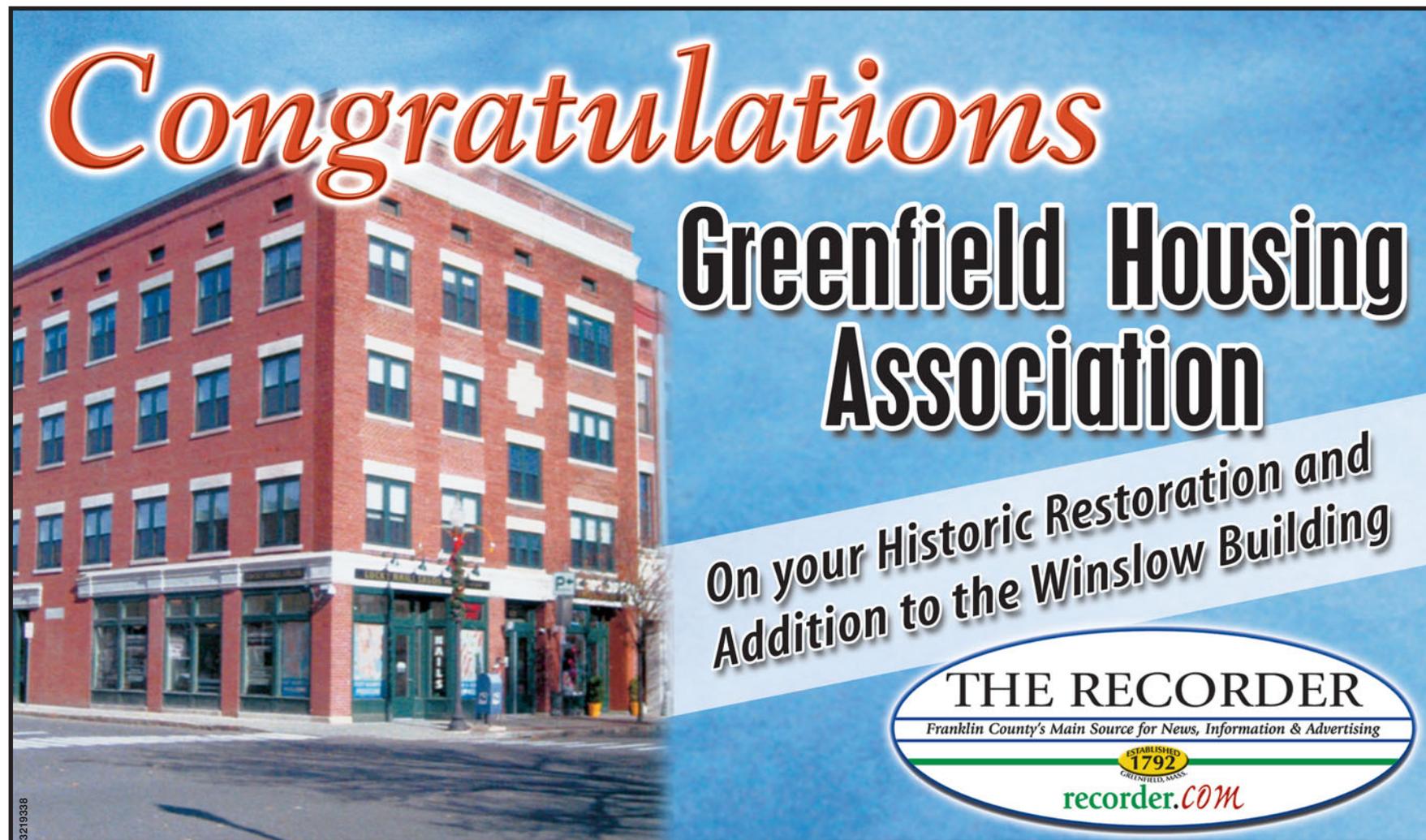
One adjustment for Whitney has been the downtown Greenfield location of the Winslow Building. Having grown up in Northfield,

and lived in towns like Cummington, Sunderland, and Shutesbury, Whitney is a country girl. The heart of Greenfield is like living in the big city to her.

"One of the things I appreciate about Greenfield is that all of the businesses downtown have an incline at the entrance, rather than a step," she said. "I don't have to think about how to get into a store. I really appreciate that."

Whitney said she was aware of the reputation of the former Harco Rooms for being a flop house for men, but the Greenfield Housing Association has been working hard to change that perception since the renovation. Residency requirements are strict, and Whitney is one of a dozen women who live in the building.

"I've had no problem with the people who are residents here," she said. "Coming here changed the trajectory of what could have happened to me (after rehabilitation). It's given me stability. I feel safe here."



**Congratulations**  
**Greenfield Housing Association**  
On your Historic Restoration and Addition to the Winslow Building

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# Thank You



## **The Winslow Building: *Positively Impacting Greenfield***

***Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc. Board:*** Randy Ward; John Cariddi (Past Executive Director); Rich Fahey; Dennis LaShier; Roseann Martoccia; Frank McDonald; Donald Williams; Mark L. Russo and Mary Lou Emond.

***Greenfield Housing Authority Board:*** Rich Fahey; T.J. Strahan; Elizabeth Serrano; Dennis Lashier and William Mason.

***Staff, Greenfield Housing Authority Management:*** John P. Counter, Executive Director; Maggie Padilla, Asst. Executive Director; Daniel Finn, Asst. Executive Director; John Mackin, Director of Facilities; Fred Parody; Bob Seaman; Greg Noyes; Jodi Clough; Nina Leone; Ann Borkowski; Lori Davis; Nadia Baraban; Kate Mitchell; Phyllis Ormond and Gary Nault.

***Franklin County Regional Housing Authority:*** Robin Sherman, Executive Director; Linda Davenport, Director of Leased Housing; Tracey Miner and the staff of FCRHA.

*Special Thanks to all of the funding sources and partners*