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 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.


"There’s no question this project has had a positive impact on the town.

A natural gas heating system replaced an oil, inefficient system. Although the renovation brought the building up to compliance with building and safety codes, it still retains much of its historical character, including tin ceilings, plaster walls, and original stairwells. Outside the facade was transformed."

"In the private market, this project would have been impossible to do," he said. "The building has been around for so long."

The subsequent renovation transferred the building to its current owner and out. Where bath-rooms were previously shared, now every apartment has a private bath-room fitted with new fixtures, a kitchen with new cabinets and appliances, a living area, and storage space. On the third floor, the expanded room and kitchen for functions and meetings. A laundry room is on the second floor, as well as free office space for social service agencies to serve clients who live in the building.

"The project was a win-win," said John Counter, former Greenfield Housing Authority executive director who headed up the Greenfield Housing Association, Inc., the private not-for-profit organization that oversaw the project. "We built the building, only four were working. Of the dozen bathrooms in which dated from 1935, were rot-holes. Many of the windows, considered nothing more than a part of the project, too. There’s no question this project has had a positive impact on the town."

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See CORNERSTONE on Page 8

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See CORNERSTONE on Page 8
Salvage project began with a vision

By MICHAEL REARDON Special To The Recorder

For 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 corner, Richard Bruff, 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 30-unit rooming house was in poor condition, with several problems including a leaky roof, which caused some tenants to be evicted to the Salvation Army building 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 at the time."

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"A lot of the building, which added security measures. Several security measures were taken, including a shared intercom system, proximity key cards to enter the building and apartments, surveillance cameras, and lighted parking lot.

The rehabilitation of the building included the replacement of the roof, HVAC and electrical systems, upgrades to plumbing and insulation, facade 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 bathroom. The building is air conditioned, handicap accessible, and non-smoking. In addition, the building has laundry facilities.

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 building was rehabilitated and expanded to provide 55 affordable rental units for single adults.

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

Added Dan Finn, assistant executive director: "It’s a place you can call home."
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 Window 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.

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

Kudos
Carditi 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, Rosanne 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.

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But, others are quick to give Carditi 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.”

Carditi 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.”
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. When the exterior components of the building were replaced, the windows that were a close historic match were selected. 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 1919 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 business, but also to hold a variety of other events. 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 Greenfield Housing Community Development.

In 1917, the building as it existed today was constructed by Mohawk Chambers on Main Street and Wells streets. The building housed Bemner’s real estate business and office space on the second floor, and had three businesses on the first floor, one of which was Mohawk Chocolates. 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 included businesses such as Mohawk Chocolates, West Side News, and Streeter Electric Company.

In 2007, the Greenfield Housing Association, 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. The building was known as the Stearns Hotel, owned by J. Howard Stearns. In May 1919, Stearns sold the hotel to Harry and Eva Cologny, who renamed it HARCO Rooms. In 2001, Richard Braff bought the property and returned it the HARCO Rooms name.

In 2007, the Greenfield Housing Association, Inc. a private, non-profit organization, bought the building from Braff for $280,000 and set about the process of renovating it for affordable housing.

In 1940s, the building was returned to its appearance from 1919, and became known as the Mohawk Chambers. In 1965, Richard Braff bought the building’s two elevator cars and returned them to use. The building became known as the Mohawk Chambers and included businesses such as Mohawk Chocolates, West Side News, and Streeter Electric Company.

In 1927, the building became known as the Hotel Winslow, with Sarah P. Bank 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 contain the fire, which caused $50,000 worth of damage.

In 1949, the building was put a new face on the corner of Main and Wells streets. The building’s facades were returned to their original appearance, including new signage. ‘Harco at left show the old tips and Mohawk at right look of the Lucky Nails salon.’

Tale of two facades

Cornerstone: A facelift

Former State Representative Christopher J. Donahue 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.’

Rozen Martoccia, vice president of the Greenfield Housing Association 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,’ said Martoccia. ‘It will be an important part of the increased vitality of the downtown.’
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.

Applications accepted at:

GREENFIELD HOUSING AUTHORITY
1 Elm Terrace, Greenfield, MA 01301 • 413-774-2932
Visit our website: www.greenfieldhousing.org
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

In 1988, Cariddi was among a group that founded Greenfield Housing Associates, Inc. (GHAI), a private nonprofit, to pursue affordable housing in the area. Cariddi said the emphasis in the past to help the elderly and disabled, this was an opportunity as does the Section 8 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

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.

John 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 was asked to address was homelessness. "The Winslow Building was essentially an opportunity presented to the GHAI as a vehicle to provide affordable housing," Cariddi said. "Many of the original residents of the building were elderly, some coming from the Jungle, an area by the railroad tracks adjacent to downtown 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, earning their GED, job training, or other programs. "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 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 (FCHRA). The FCHRA 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 $3,400 for residents. But because rents are subsidized, even those low-income residents have more disposable income to spend in downtown stores and other businesses.

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 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 community." Another important issue, as President Deval Patrick's administration has a high percentage of single people who are homeless, said Counter. "There is a high percentage of single people who are homeless," Counter said.

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

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What 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. 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 what could have happened to me (after rehabilitation). It’s given me stability. I feel safe here.”
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.

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