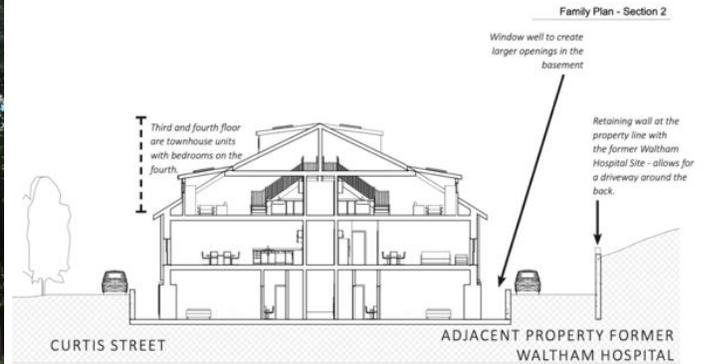


## WALTHAM ARMORY PROJECT FACT SHEET

The Waltham State Armory was built in 1908 and is on the corner of Sharon and Curtis Streets. The building is listed under the National Register of Historic Places and was sold in 2014 to Heritage Hall LLC<sup>4</sup>. The property was sold by the State in 2004 to a private developer and has been vacant for several years.



### What is being proposed?

The proposal is to convert this building into 23 affordable housing units-- 17 for residents making 60% Area Median Income (AMI) and 6 for residents making 30% AMI. 13 one bedrooms, 8 two bedrooms and two three bedrooms. Each unit would have 1.5 parking spaces, equaling 34 parking spaces.

### Why is this project needed?

There is a lack of affordable housing for Waltham's low-wage workers in the service industry. There is a 3-5 year wait period to get into Waltham public housing and very few options for safe and affordable apartments.

### How much is the building and land worth?

An independent appraisal was conducted by a company familiar with affordable housing development and the Armory was estimated to have a value of \$2.9 million assuming a 23-unit residential redevelopment.

### How much will this cost?

The project will cost approximately \$12 million to buy the property and develop the affordable housing within the existing structure.

### Where will this funding come from?

The Community Preservation Committee has approved \$5 Million for purchase and development of the property. Metro West CD will be able to secure more than \$7 million in federal and state tax dollars to complete the development.

### Who will own the building?

A nonprofit organization which has a proven track record of developing affordable housing, Metro West CD, will form a single purpose LLC to buy the building. Metro West CD will be the managing member of the LLC. This is standard practice for non-profit affordable housing development.

### Will the City have control of the building?

Yes. The City will maintain control by having a deed restriction on the property. This allows the City to set the parameters for the affordable housing use and provides the City with an important oversight role. As with all affordable housing in Waltham, the management for the Armory apartments would be required to report annually to the City's

Housing Division to account for the income verification of the current tenants, rent rates, and a copy of all leases to ensure compliance with the affordable housing deed restriction.

### **Why can't the City buy the building and develop it as affordable housing?**

While this is an option, the City would not have the degree of access to the additional \$7 million in state and federal funds needed for this project.

### **How long will this Armory conversion take?**

This project is projected to take 2-3 years. With much of 2021 being used for the comprehensive permit process and for securing state and federal funding. Construction projected to start 2022 and the hope of occupancy in 2023.

### **Who supports this affordable housing proposal?**

There is support from Mayor McCarthy, the Waltham Community Preservation Committee, the Waltham Historic Commission, and WATCH CDC.

### **Will the historical element of the Armory be maintained?**

The Armory is registered under the National Historic Registry, any changes made to the building will have to be approved by the State Historic Commission.

### **What changes will be made to the appearance of the Armory?**

Minor changes are proposed such as the addition of dormers on the 3rd floor. This would be needed in order to fit the 23 units in the building. Affordable housing projects need to be over 20 units in order to be eligible for state and federal funding otherwise they would not be financially feasible.

### **Will converting the Armory change the traffic patterns of the neighborhood?**

Any conversion from an abandoned property to active use will produce some traffic. There is currently planned improvements being made to increase the flow of traffic in the vicinity separate from this project..

### **Will there be a mortgage on this property?**

There will be a \$2 million dollar mortgage which will be paid with revenue raised by the rent payments of the tenants.

### **Will this project make a profit from the rents?**

No. The project is meant to be revenue neutral and any small balance at the end of the year will carry over for any building expenses in future years.

### **Who will be responsible for managing the apartments once they are completed.**

Metro West CD, which owns several similar projects in nearby towns, will hire a 3rd party property manager to oversee the day to day operation of the apartments. Metro West CD currently contracts with the property manager that also manages St. Mary's Apartments in Waltham. Metro West CD will be responsible for oversight of the project overall.

### **Can this money be used for something else?**

The funds for this project come from the Community Preservation Fund. These funds can only be used for historic preservation, open space and recreation and affordable housing. At least 10% is set aside for each of these 3 uses. The remaining 70% can be used for any of these uses.

### **What action has the City taken so far on the Armory proposal?**

- August 2019, WATCH CDC submitted a proposal to the Waltham Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for funding for a feasibility study to see if affordable housing would be an appropriate use for the vacant Armory Building. This funding was approved by the CPC.
- In June 2020, the feasibility study was submitted to the CPC showing affordable housing as a good use.
- On November 24, 2020 the Waltham CPC approved the Metro West CD proposal for \$5 Million (\$3 Million to buy the property and \$2 Million to develop).
- On Dec. 21, 2020, the City Council Long Term Debt Committee met to discuss the proposal and it was tabled for further discussion.