

HOUSING

The
Portland
Observer

Piedmont property now eyed for senior housing

Agency helping alcoholics, drug abusers and AIDS patients presents new alternative, neighbors call positive direction

By LEE PERLMAN

After two years of struggle and debate, there may be a happy end to the saga of the redevelopment of the Rosemont School property in the Piedmont neighborhood.

Central City Concern, a social service agency, and developer

Brian McCarl have signed an agreement in principle to purchase and co-develop the property at 597 N. Dekum St. in cooperation with HOST Community Development, Inc., according to McCarl and CCC executive director Richard Harris. Under the agreement, McCarl and CCC would

remodel the existing former convent building to provide 60 units of low-income senior housing, and construct an adjacent building to house another 50 "assisted living" housing units. HOST would use five acres of the 7.6 acre site to build an as-yet unknown amount of owner-occupied housing.

HOST president Ted Gilbert says that his organization, which builds low-cost housing for home ownership, has not yet signed an agreement and is still evaluating the "feasibility" of the proposal. "How many units we would build, what kind

of housing, what it would look like, are things we don't have the answer to yet," he says.

McCarl says that if negotiations with HOST fall through, there are other "interested parties" who could develop owner-occupied housing on the site.

CCC obtained an option to purchase the former Villa St. Rose Catholic school, and Rosemont School for delinquent girls, in 1995. They originally proposed to build 75 units of housing for recovering alcoholics and drug abusers and their families there, as well as 25 housing units for AIDS

patients. The Piedmont Neighborhood Association protested, saying that concentrating so much housing for a "fragile" population in one place would hurt their efforts to create a "stable" neighborhood of home owners. The two sides engaged in on-again, off-again negotiations for two years, discussing various development plans but never reaching agreement.

Harris says his agency backed away from its original plan

because "we couldn't obtain financing and we couldn't win community support." CCC does not have

financing in place for its current proposal, but Harris and McCarl say funding for their current proposal is readily available.

In "assisted living," seniors live independently in their own apartments, but staff is available to help with daily tasks they can no longer perform. McCarl says that the Rosemont proposal would give seniors a "range of living options" that would allow them to "age in place." Harris says that the current proposal meets CCC's mission of providing low-cost housing while meeting

Piedmont's desire to have owner-occupancy.

Because of previous almost-agreements that had fallen through, Piedmont representatives are wary of embracing the current proposal too heartily. Former president Betsy Radigan says the group is "cautiously optimistic that discussions are moving in a positive direction."

Another official, Tom Markgraf, told Piedmont's membership last month, "It's too early to break out the champagne. We can't relax before the homes are occupied."

New Orleans-style restaurant due on Alberta

Karen Berry and Kellie Courtney plan to open a new restaurant, featuring "upscale New Orleans-style Cajun and southern cooking," at 2904 N.E. Alberta Street, starting in February. The pair is seeking a license for on-premises beer and wine sales, and received an endorsement from the Concordia Neighborhood Association last week. Courtney says the pair live within six blocks of the establishment and "like the neighborhood a lot."

New senior high rise wins neighborhood approval

The Piedmont Neighborhood Association has given its blessing to the Alberta Simmons project, a proposed five-story housing project for low-income seniors to be built on Northeast Martin Luther King Boulevard at Dekum Street. According to Chris Cross of Housing Our Families, a non-profit corporation, the structure will have 74 units, 5,000 square feet of retail space, 29 underground parking spaces, and stucco siding. The project is being financed by a grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, Cross says, and must be under construction by March. Former Piedmont president Tom Markgraf called the project "The best development project on MLK in our neighborhood we've seen since I don't know when."

Council debates accessory rentals

City Council heard extensive argument last week for and against a proposal to allow accessory apartments in single family homes and properties. Currently such rentals can be built only in houses of 2,000 square feet or more that are at least five years old. The new proposal would allow them in smaller houses, as part of new construction, as parts of garages or as separate structures on the lot. Also, where existing law requires that one of the units be owner-occupied at the time of conversion, the new law would require the owners to live on premises only in the case of a converted older house, and only at the time of conversion.

Mayor Vera Katz called for a second hearing on November 12 or 13th. She asked the Planning Bureau staff to consider several possible changes in the new law, including applying it only in certain neighborhoods.

Groups Show Faith In Affordable Housing

In a cooperative effort to boost the stock of affordable housing in Northeast Portland, more than 20 local congregations have pledged \$50,000 in support of Portland Habitat for Humanity's first interfaith house-building project. Sponsors of the project hope it will truly represent the diversity of religious thought and practice in Portland, demonstrating how people of all faiths share a desire to help other in times of need.

The project, a four-home subdivision at NE 7th Avenue and Church Street dubbed Covenant gardens, is expected to cost \$165,000 over the next year. To celebrate the beginning

of construction, representatives from the sponsor faith groups and Portland Habitat will conduct a groundbreaking ceremony on Sunday, October 26, at 3 p.m.

Although they will be built using volunteer labor and donated materials, these houses are not hand-outs. Rather, they will provide a hand up to families who would otherwise have no opportunity for home ownership. The future Covenant Gardens homeowners will purchase their homes from Habitat at cost, approximately \$45,000 each, through zero-interest, mortgages and will contribute 400 hours of sweat equity.

Campaign For Renters' Rights Neighborhood Speakout

The Community Alliance of Tenants is holding a Renters' Rights Neighborhood Speakout in outer Southeast Portland as part of the Campaign for Renters' Rights. The speakout will be held Tuesday, October 28th, 7:00 PM at the Mount Scott Presbyterian Church, SE 73rd & Harold St. Bus #10 Harold.

The Speakout is a chance for area renters to learn about Oregon's Landlord Tenant Law, tell their own stories, and get involved with CAT's Campaign for Renters' Rights. There will also be a Renters' Rights Clinic--staffed by volunteer lawyers and CAT hotline

staff - to answer specific questions in a one on one atmosphere.

The Neighborhood Speakout is a great opportunity to get involved with the Renters' Rights Movement and win real protections for renters from abusive landlords. Anyone interested in Renters' rights and social justice issues should attend.

This event is free and wheelchair accessible. Free childcare will be provided if arranged in advance. For more information or to register for childcare, call the Community Alliance of Tenants at 460-9702.

Contractors Show Support For Job Programs



Construction Management's Executive Vice President and Project Coordinator, William Gollhofer (left), Steven J. Davis (right).

City Commissioner Erik Sten helped present checks for \$2,000 each to Portland Youthbuilders, Southeast Works and the Northeast Workforce Center.

The money was raised last summer at a fundraising golf tournament organized by construction contractors and Environmental Services.

"This event benefitted some very valuable community job training programs, and the contractors who work with the City every day building our sewer infrastructure recognize how valuable these programs are," said Sten. "Contractors took the initiative to organize this tournament, raise this money, and reinvest it in the community."

The tournament organizer was Willie Gollhofer, Executive Vice President of Construction Management and Technical Services. CMTS is a minority-owned firm that provides construction inspection and management services at numerous Bureau of Environmental Services sewer construction projects around Portland.

Because of the amount of business CMTS does with the City, Gollhofer hit

on the idea of a fundraising event to boost community jobs programs. The theme of the fundraising tournament was "Giving Back To The Community."

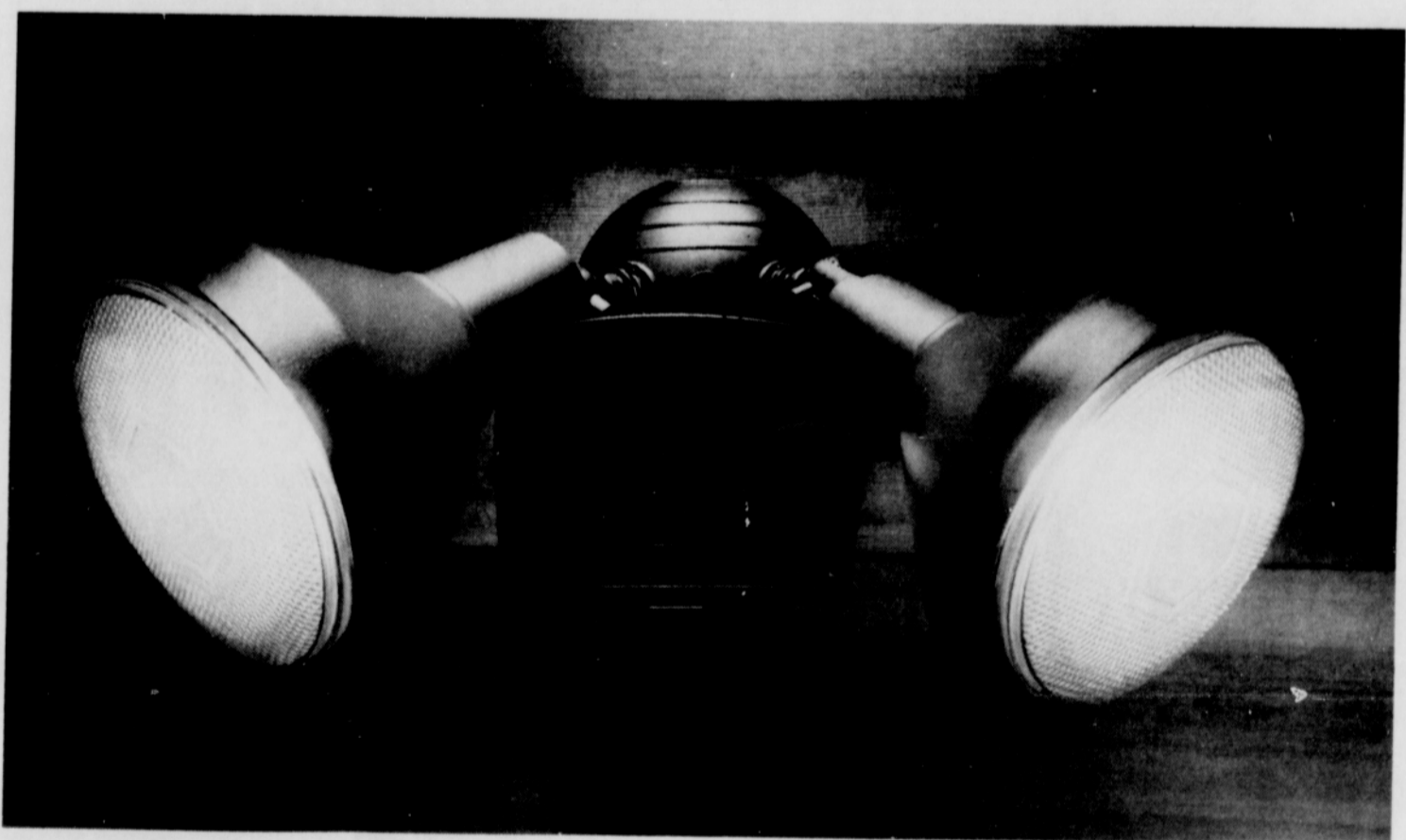
The programs that benefited from the tournament are all community-based organizations with a diverse clientele:

* Southeast Works offers personal job skill counseling and workshops to youth, dislocated workers and the unemployed or under-employed. (For more information about Southeast Works Contact Executive Director Heidi Soderberg, 774-4650.)

* Northeast Workforce Center provides job information, support, counseling and other resources to the unemployed and under-employed. (For more information about Northeast Workforce Center, contact Executive Director Jennie Portis, 288-4370.)

* Portland Youthbuilders provides education, vocational training and leadership for very low-income youth in north and northeast Portland. (For more information about Portland Youthbuilders, contact Executive Director Jill Walters, 286-9350.)

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A NIGHT-LIGHT.



Wander outside your darkened home tonight and you'll find plenty of reminders about the benefits of automatic lighting. The sprinkler head will politely remind your toe. The hanging plant will tenderly remind your cranium. And over in the driveway, the car bumper will ever-so-gently remind your kneecap. Now here's another reminder: Outdoor lighting systems can help make your home less attractive to thieves. Without wasting precious energy. And to learn more about these space age gizmos, all you have to remember is Portland General Electric's Power Smart program. Where you can get energy-saving tips on heating, hot water, appliances and more. It's all part of our ongoing effort to tell you about the latest energy-efficient technologies. And to help you use energy wisely. So call soon: 1-800-722-9287. Before your kneecap decides to remind you again.

Water Conservation Workshop

Are you letting your toilet rob \$50 from you each year? About one-in-five of Portland toilets have a silent and costly leak. Find out how to fix this and other common problems that may be costing you more than you know. The Community Energy Project will be holding a FREE water conservation workshop. Learn how to detect leaks around your home, make sense of the water-sewer bill and repair leaky faucets and toilets. We will also share ways all of us can live comfortably while reducing water use. Everyone will receive a kit worth \$25 for FREE. These materials can help you save \$80 or more per year!

To register, call the Community Energy Project at 284-6827.



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