

The WestEnd Commons

Affordable Family Housing for Our Neighbourhood



A project of St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc.

The first project for St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc. is to convert the sanctuary and upper 3 floors of St. Matthew's Anglican Church into a housing complex which will be an inclusive, multi-generational, secular, stable community to support the well-being of all the residents and the healthy development of children.

The WestEnd Commons, the resulting multi-use complex, will include 25 affordable residential units with a central plaza, a worship space for St. Matthew's Anglican Church and its partners, and the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on the lower level. This residential project is the sequel to the successful renovation of the lower level in 2005/6.

The new housing is for newcomers to Canada, Aboriginal families, people with mental health challenges, larger families and single parent families¹. All will need to meet the requirement for projects receiving government capital grants of household incomes under \$50,000 a year. Limited income families in the west central area are in critical need of safe, quality, affordable housing.

Sixteen of the units will be subsidized by Manitoba Housing (rent-geared to income) and 4 are for Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's mental health housing support program whose clients have portable rental support. The 1200 square foot plaza will be a common space, planned to foster community among the residents.

In addition to the families who will make The WestEnd Commons their home, 4 distinct congregations: St. Matthew's Anglican, Grain of Wheat Church Community, Emmanuel Mission and Shiloh Apostolic, will continue their ministry from the space. The Neighbourhood Resource Centre will continue as an active and vital community asset providing support and programs for a wide range of people. Agencies housed in the facility include St. Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry (United and Anglican Churches), The Urban (Lutheran Urban Ministries), West Central Community Program, Mosaic English Language Program, Aboriginal Friendship Sewing Circle, Assiniboine AA Group, and the Thelma Wynne Project. The renovated Neighbourhood Resource Centre includes a commercial kitchen, multipurpose spaces, a drop-in centre with food bank, kitchen and computer space, and office/meeting/worship space for community and church programs. The affordable housing initiative further expands the capacity of the building to serve the needs of the neighbourhood.

Benefits of this housing complex for the neighbourhood include:

- expanded opportunities for affordable quality living in the core area without displacing those already resident in the neighbourhood,
- the creation of a model development for a family oriented community,
- enhanced impact of the existing government investment in the Neighbourhood Resource Centre in the lower level of The WestEnd Commons, and,
- the retention of a valuable community resource in West Central Winnipeg.

¹ 24 rental units: 3 one bedroom units [\$625/mos], 15 two bedroom units [\$863/mos], 5 three bedroom units [\$1063/mos], and 1 four bedroom unit [\$1225/mos]

St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc.

The goal of St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc. is to create and maintain safe, quality, affordable housing for families in West Central Winnipeg, without financial gain. It is a partnership of the Grain of Wheat Church Community and St. Matthew's Anglican, with Board representation from these two congregations as well as St. Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry and the community. Advisors include: Spence Neighbourhood Association, The United Church of Canada and SAM Management. The current Board is: Roger Gateson (Chairperson), Cathy Campbell (Vice-Chairperson), Rob Dueck (Treasurer), Gail Schnabl and Tony Schweitzer (Co-Secretaries), Bob Clarkson, Ian Fergusson, Tina Keeper and John McNairnay.

The corporation has a 50 year lease to develop and manage The WestEnd Commons.

Project Details

Architect: Ken MacKinnon - Friesen Tokar Architects

Project Management: Gerry Humphreys – Milestone Project Management

The total cost of the project is \$4,661,062. Ninety percent of the funds are in place from the 3 levels of government, a mortgage from the Assiniboine Credit Union and St. Matthew's Church.

A Capital Campaign will be launched to raise the remaining \$460,000 and an additional \$270,000 to increase the energy efficiency and sustainability of the complex. In addition, the St. Matthew's Anglican congregation will invest \$250,000 in creating its new worship space in the complex.

The WestEnd Commons Endowment Fund

St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc. is committed to creating The WestEnd Commons Endowment Fund, a proposed \$1,000,000 fund to be administered by the Winnipeg Foundation. The overall purpose of the Endowment Fund is to sustain the life and work of The WestEnd Commons.

The annual interest will be used to enhance the quality of life among residents and support the programs in the Neighbourhood Resource Centre. The WestEnd Commons Endowment Fund will increase the quality of life in West Central Winnipeg and stimulate the development of activities that improve the neighbourhood.

For more information: Cathy Campbell 774-1846

The Commons: "the social and political space where things get done and where people have a sense of belonging and an element of control over their lives", providing "sustenance, security and independence".

The Ecologist (1996: 9)

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