



Figure 1. 584 Water Street, indicated in blue, relative to Williamstown town center.

## LOCATION

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The proposed project site is located at 584 Water Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts and is approximately one mile south of the town center (see figure 1). Water Street is also known as State Route 43.

Massachusetts State Routes 7 and 2, which are respectively major north-south and east-west arterial roads, are less than two miles distant.

## SITE

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The site is 6.6 acres in area and abuts the Green River (see figure 2). It consists of two flat meadows bisected by a marsh that was formerly a bend in the Green River before the river's course was permanently straightened by the Department of Public Works in 1955.

The lower meadow is largely within the 200-foot riparian buffer of the Green River and its use is limited by wetlands regulations. The marsh that bisects the property is protected by a 100-foot buffer. Our project site, in the upper meadow, will not require wetlands review since all work is wholly outside of the buffer areas.

Town sewer, water and gas mains are immediately accessible to the development approximately five feet below the road surface of Route 43. We will not use gas in this development, however.



Figure 2. An aerial view of the site showing two meadows bisected by marsh and the former Grange Hall.

## PROJECT CONCEPT AND ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

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Our project will be the first affordable, net-zero energy, combustion-free, passive house residential development in Berkshire County (see figure 3). All of our construction methods and materials will be specified with an eye toward reducing embodied carbon, limiting the impact of construction on the site, and preserving and accentuating the natural landscape.

The landscape design will use only native plant materials and will encourage pollinators and other native fauna. Insofar as possible, we want to eliminate gas powered lawn equipment and its accompanying noise and toxic pollutants.

All buildings will have roof mounted photovoltaic panels with the intention that the annual energy consumption of each dwelling unit will be net-zero.



*Figure 3. A view down the main road of the project looking east.*

**UNIT COUNT AND CHAPTER 40B**

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We will build twenty-one units of housing. Of the twenty-one units, five will be affordable under the provisions of Chapter 40B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

We will build eight two-family cottages and five apartments in a renovated historic building located at the southern edge of the property.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

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We have reviewed the project with Andrew Groff, the Williamstown Director of Planning and Community Development. Mr. Groff has been supportive of this project from its outset.

We have also reviewed the project with the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust at two separate public hearings. We have indications that the Trust will support this project.

**HISTORIC BUILDING ADAPTIVE REUSE**

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We will restore and adaptively reuse an existing historic building on the site that formerly housed the Williamstown Grange Society (see figure 4). The building was constructed in 1932. The building is not specifically protected or designated as a historic structure, but we believe that it is part of the historic fabric of the town and that it should be renovated and preserved.



*Figure 4. The building housing the former Williamstown Grange Society.*

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## **GROUP 2B ACCESSIBLE UNITS**

We would like to specifically address the needs of accessibility in our development and have designated the five units contained in the former Grange building as Massachusetts Group 2B accessible units (521 CMR). The basic configuration of ramps, interior spaces, passageways, door clearances will be suitable for homeowners in wheelchairs. Additional features such as grab bars, compliant fixtures and cabinetry could be installed based on the actual demand for Group 2B units.

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## **CONSTRUCTION METHOD**

The two-family cottages will be built in a manufacturing facility by KBS Builders, Inc. located in South Paris, Maine. Each cottage consists of four modular units approximately sixteen feet wide and sixty feet long. The units will be trucked to the site and craned into place on a frame approximately 30 inches above grade and supported by helical piles. There will be no cast-in-place concrete used for the homes, a material with high levels of embodied carbon. Plumbing and electrical hookups, exterior finish carpentry and limited interior finish carpentry will be done on-site by local tradespeople.

The Grange Society building will be renovated by local tradespeople in its entirety.

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## **MECHANICAL SYSTEMS**

Each dwelling unit will have a unitized state-of-the-art air handler that provides heating, cooling, heat recovery ventilation, air filtration and dehumidification. The unit, the Pentacare V-12, is produced in Canada by Minotair Ventilation inc. It requires no outdoor condensing unit and fan. The unit's HEPA filters are rated at 15 MERV, which is a level of filtration provided at hospital inpatient care units.

More than 95% of airborne dust and all airborne bacteria, pollen and automobile emissions are removed at this level of filtration. The unit is compact, and filters are easy for the homeowner to change. The unit will provide a continuous supply of fresh, tempered air and continually exhaust kitchen and bathroom air regardless of the season or outdoor temperature.

Hot water heating will be provided by an electric water heater or an electric heat pump water heater with an external condensing unit subject to further review.

## **UNIT PRICING**

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Sale prices of affordable units have been reviewed with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Sales prices of the market rate units have been reviewed with Alton & Westall, a Williamstown residential real estate brokerage.

Sales prices for our market rate units were based on an analysis of comparable units for sale at The River Houses at Cable Mills (see figure 5).

This comparable development is 0.8 miles north of our site. Like our project, The River Houses are located on State Route 43. The units at this nearby development are currently offered at \$511 per net square foot. Conversely, our pricing is calculated based on a \$453 per net square foot basis. Both projects are modern buildings in a rural setting. Modernist aesthetic is familiar to Williamstown.



*Figure 5. The River Houses at Cable Mills a comparable project less than a mile north of our project site.*

Sales prices for our affordable units were calculated using the Chapter 40B methodology outlined on the DHCD web site and are derived from the HUD Pittsfield area fiscal year 2022 income limits summary. Mortgage rates and sale prices have been updated as of August 26 for a 30-year fixed instrument assuming a 5% down payment and an interest rate of 5.13%.

By the provisions of Chapter 40B, any profits in excess of 20% will be returned to the Williamstown Affordable Housing Trust for their use.

Our revenue summary is attached.

## **DEVELOPMENT COSTS**

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We have used local firms to estimate construction costs and development fees wherever possible. Where needed, we have used data from Celebration Green Design & Build, the construction firm owned by codeveloper Bill Freeman.

## **PLANNED PHASING**

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We would complete all site work and build a single two-family cottage as part of our initial construction phase. One of the two cottage dwelling units would be furnished as a model sales unit.

This initial phase would entail a cost of approximately \$670,000 for overall site development and approximately \$725,000 for the construction of a single two-family cottage for an overall first phase cost of approximately \$1.4M. Subsequent cottages would be built on demand for buyers.

Our phasing plan is subject to review and modification by the DHCD.

## **PRINCIPALS**

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**Bill Freeman.** Mr. Freeman has built or developed nearly a thousand units of housing in central and coastal Connecticut in a 40-year career. He has won numerous awards for green and zero energy construction. His company is Celebration Green Design & Build, and it is based in Guilford, Connecticut. An appendix is attached that depicts some of Mr. Freeman's projects done in Connecticut.

**Hicks Stone.** Mr. Stone has been licensed to practice architecture in Massachusetts since 1986. Since that time, he has designed single family and multifamily projects throughout the U.S. He is certified as a passive house consultant by the *Passivhaus Institut* in Darmstadt, Germany. His firm is based in Williamstown.

<b>REVENUE</b>	
<b>UNIT SALES</b>	
<b>Market Rate Units - 16 at Various Prices</b>	
Market Rate Duplex Units - 14 3BR 3B - 1434 NSF at \$650,000	9,100,000
Market Rate Grange Units - Unit 1 - 2BR 2B - 1244 NSF	560,000
Market Rate Grange Units - Unit 3 - 1BR 1B - 864 NSF	390,000
Premiums and Extras - 2% of Market Rate Sales	201,000
<b>Affordable Units - 5 at Various Prices</b>	<b>780,000</b>
Affordable Duplex Unit - 3BR 3B - 1434 NSF	180,000
Affordable Duplex Unit - 3BR 3B - 1434 NSF	180,000
Unit 2 - 1BR 1B - 684 NSF	150,000
Unit 4 - 1BR 1B - 844 NSF	150,000
Unit 5 - Studio 1B - 404 NSF	120,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 11,031,000</b>

Pricing of affordable units is determined by the formula mandated by the DHCD. The pricing requirements were confirmed in a call with Rieko Hayashi, the Local Initiative Program Director at the DHCD, on August 15<sup>th</sup>. The pricing of the three Grange Hall units may be decreased based on further review with the DHCD.

Pricing is derived by calculating 75% of the respective median household income and taken from the HUD 2022 income limits summary for the Pittsfield area in fiscal year 2022.