

New Life at Stuart Farm

Virginia Bush Suttman, president of the Kent Affordable Housing Board, wants moderate income residents, who are being priced out of the region's real estate market, to have homes they can afford. Stuart Farm is an example of affordable rental housing that works well in small town Connecticut, with architecture and scale appropriate to the setting. The two-acre property has five apartments, three of which were added at the back of the building to make it resemble a family compound.

"This 1828 farmhouse, only a quarter mile from the center of town, was in foreclosure. Its bones were still good, but it had been neglected. We worked with LISC to purchase it and to hire a consultant who helped us find funding, get zoning approvals, develop architectural plans and manage construction. Having used only one acre, we hope to add five more apartments on the second acre to provide stable, comfortable, high quality homes in a place where they are sorely needed."



Success: John's daughter lived nearby, and when he had a leg amputated she suggested that he consider moving to Kent. He was concerned because he was confined to a wheelchair, but willing to give it a try.

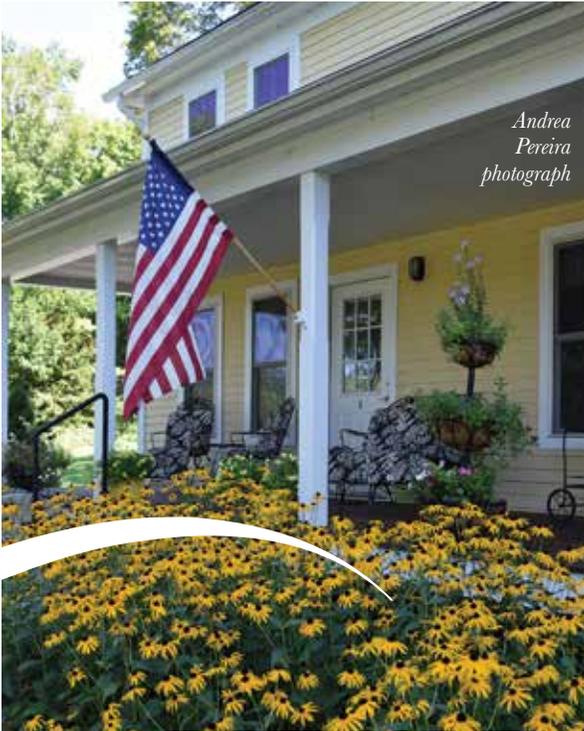
"This was a drastic change, coming here in a wheelchair. I wanted to be independent and was thinking, "No matter what, I'm going to walk my daughter up the aisle." This apartment gave me a new lease on life, with flat, open spaces, an accessible bathroom and an entrance ramp. It's a very therapeutic environment – the air, the people, the location – and the walk into town provides additional physical therapy. I got out of the wheelchair into a walker, and now I use only a walking stick, mostly just for peace of mind."



Success: Tom and his wife moved from another town in the region that was becoming too crowded and expensive for them. When they arrived, Tom was in need of physical therapy, but now he walks up the mountain with Max, his qualified assistive dog.

"I'd been having trouble walking, but a month after moving in I was hiking up the mountain. We love the whole area – the people are friendly and we can walk into downtown. Sitting on this porch is great, just breathing the air up here. The bathroom is accessible, with grab bars for security, and we even have an extra bedroom for my model train layout."





Andrea
Pereira
photograph



When and where:

Located just outside of Kent’s scenic commercial center, Stuart Farm still resembles the colonial farmhouse that it originally was. Set back from the road, it offers a welcoming wraparound porch, ample off-street parking, extensive landscaping and a community atmosphere.

What:

Stuart Farm has five apartments – two with one bedroom, two with two bedrooms, and one completely handicapped accessible. All are affordably priced below market rates for residents with limited or moderate incomes.

Why and how:

LISC provided Kent Affordable Housing with a capacity building grant and a \$175,000 acquisition loan for Stuart Farm. Through Housing Connections, LISC also provided technical assistance from inception to completion.

Who:

Funders and investors for this development were the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, Union Savings Bank and private sources. We sincerely thank them all for their support of this important effort.

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