

## Reclaiming a neighborhood: Hartford's Vine Street

Emily Wolfe, deputy director of Sheldon Oak Central, is a true believer. She understands that a community is more than just well-maintained buildings, but must have heart, caring neighbors and gathering places. The work Sheldon Oak has done to revitalize Vine Street in north Hartford demonstrates this belief. It includes a community garden with plots for all who want them, a club room for residents and large grassy areas where kids can play.

*“These are majestic buildings, set back, with an impressive scale. We knew we could have a huge positive impact on an entire city block for a reasonable investment. After renovation they leased up immediately with a nice mix of tenants.”*

Sheldon Oak was asked to help save this important block at a major intersection. The complex had four abandoned and five blighted buildings, but also had access to a library, shopping and a major cultural institution. After talking to key stakeholders to learn about issues and concerns, Sheldon Oak closed alleys, improved landscaping and lighting, made apartments handicapped accessible on the first floors, and added on-site management.



**Success:** Pam, Phyllis and their godson, Ta'naz, were happy to move here because living in Hartford puts them closer to work. Feeling secure is particularly important for Pam, a veteran. Pam especially enjoys the community garden that was started by residents and Sheldon Oak Central.

*“I like the community – that’s the nice part. I feel safer here. Everybody’s quiet, and on the same page.”*

**Success:** James serves as superintendent for the property, and lives on the second floor with his wife Cynthia. They came from New Haven, and really like the Vine Street area. They lived here before the buildings were renovated, and chose to return.

*“We lived here before the renovation and liked the area, so we came back from New Haven when this became available. We really enjoy the quiet and privacy of our second floor unit.”*





## When and where:

The apartments at 4-40 Vine Street are directly off Albany Avenue. This main artery in and out of downtown Hartford provides ready access to retail, entertainment and transportation.

## What:

The nine buildings were constructed between 1920 and 1924 and had become run down before Sheldon Oak renovated them in 2014. They contain 74 affordable rental apartments, with a great mix of tenants. Some apartments are for families, the elderly, or people who were formerly homeless. Some offer handicapped access and some are rented at market rates.

## Why and how:

LISC provided a predevelopment grant and project investment for a total of \$97,000 to jumpstart the development. LISC also provides capacity building grants and ongoing operating support to Sheldon Oak Central.

## Who:

Funders and investors for this development were Red Stone Equity Partners, Connecticut Department of Housing, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, City of Hartford, Eversource Energy, Corporation for Supportive Housing, LISC, Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation and TD Bank. We sincerely thank them all for their support of this important effort.

## Thanks to the funders who support LISC's work in Hartford

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