

NINA

Revitalizing Asylum Hill

For Immediate Release

Asylum Hill Rehab Receives Financial Boost From CL&P

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The transformation of the blond-brick building at the corner of Ashley and Garden Streets from a symbol of decay to a centerpiece of neighborhood renewal received another boost this week when CL&P provided \$500,000 towards its renovation. The three-story mixed-use building at 207 Garden Street is already undergoing a makeover of sorts with the installation of new windows and façade improvements to the retail spaces on the ground floor courtesy of the City of Hartford's Façade Improvement Program. The funds from CL&P will now make possible the restoration of the apartment units upstairs. When complete, the 11,000 square foot building will feature retail space on the first floor, residential apartments on the second floor, and commercial office space on the third floor.

The project is sponsored by Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (NINA), which has been working with neighbors to revitalize the Asylum Hill neighborhood since 2001.

NINA was formed by the major institutions in the neighborhood, including Aetna, The Hartford Financial Services Group, Saint Francis Hospital, and Webster Bank, as a response to the deteriorating conditions in Asylum Hill. A major symbol of that deterioration had been this 1926 structure which stands at the gateway to the Asylum Hill neighborhood. When NINA acquired the building in 2010 from an absentee investor from Brooklyn, NY, it was entirely vacant except for a pizza shop and package store on the ground floor.

"This project presents NINA with an exciting opportunity to establish a prominent new anchor for the corner of Ashley and Garden Streets, one that will inject new momentum and stability into the revitalization of this area of Asylum Hill," said Lynda Godkin, chair of NINA's Board of Directors. "We are thrilled to be working once again with CL&P, a strong and vital community partner in NINA's work," Ms. Godkin added. Since 2006, CL&P has invested over \$1.3 million in NINA projects including the renovation of six historic homes on Ashley and Garden Streets.

207 Garden Street will be known as the Zunner Building in honor of George A. Zunner, Sr. (1861-1936), the most prolific architect in Hartford history. Mr. Zunner designed this blond-brick structure as well as over 600 other structures in Hartford ranging from single-family homes to Perfect Six apartment buildings and mixed-use structures like 207 Garden Street.

The revitalization of the Zunner Building will build on NINA's other redevelopment work in the area including the restoration of over a dozen historic homes that has helped earn Asylum Hill the designation as one of the best neighborhoods in America for first-time homebuyers to purchase an historic property (*This Old House Magazine*).