



City of Newburgh Office of Planning & Development

The DRC Redevelopment Project

October 2017

Background of the project

On November 25, 2016, the City of Newburgh released a request for developer proposals for an area of the City Center on the downtown hillside overlooking the Hudson River, as a focus for redevelopment. The area defined for redevelopment includes two architecturally significant buildings – the 1835 Alexander Jackson Davis designed Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the Andrew Jackson Downing designed City Club. A 1.8 acre parcel of Urban Renewal land was included for the purposes of providing an income generating project to support the preservation and restoration of the City Club and the DRC, and to ensure a public use of the DRC. Proposals were due by February 1, 2017. Press coverage was disseminated and widespread including articles in all of the local papers of record, and in regional and state-wide preservation publications; City Council was consulted; and a distinguished review team, including representatives from the Preservation League of New York State (the League), the NYS Office of Parks and Historic Preservation (SHPO), architects and planners, the Newburgh IDA and professional staff was assembled. Three very different complete, and very competent applications were received. Each was collaborative including the lead developer, an architectural firm and some aspect of community development.

After extensive review which included three full presentations, Alembic Community Development, an experienced community developer, teamed with three organizations with a long commitment to inclusive revitalization initiatives, was chosen not only because of their track record but also for their community development approach and public participation plan. Not only do they have the ability to stabilize the DRC as soon as the City can approve a preliminary development agreement, but they also view the DRC in its fully restored state as maintaining public programming. The project encompasses the restoration of the two iconic historical buildings, the DRC and the City Club, and the development of 165 mixed-income residential units (for sale and rent) and both commercial and community facility space on the vacant block at Montgomery and Second Streets. Most importantly to the review team, the development plan proposes an extensive public planning process, where stakeholders in the neighborhood will work with the developer to determine the best and final uses in the project.

Development Team

The development team (Alembic) includes Alembic Community Development, a mission-led community development firm that has developed over 1,100 units of housing and over 100,000 square feet of commercial and community facility space, including four historic buildings in New York City and New Orleans; Hester Street Collaborative, nonprofit urban planning, design and development organization that provides technical assistance and capacity building expertise to enable community leaders and residents to guide and shape the futures of their neighborhoods; and Community Access, an experienced nonprofit development and service organization with an international reputation for provision of peer-led case management and employment opportunities for individuals living with disabilities. Urban Architectural Initiatives, the project architect, is an award-winning architectural practice based in New York City.

Project webpage: <https://www.cityofnewburgh-ny.gov/planning-development/pages/the-drc-redevelopment-project>



Development Components

The project has five elements. The specific features of these, as well as the end use of the two historic properties, will be determined in consultation with neighborhood residents and community leaders. The project includes:

1. The stabilization and restoration of the interior and exterior of the Dutch Reformed Church in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, with oversight from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
2. The restoration of the façade of the City Club and development of the building as a mixed use commercial building.
3. The development of mixed-income residential buildings at the Montgomery and Second Street sites, including homeownership and rental units;
4. The development of supportive housing with on-site services for seniors and families; and,
5. The development of commercial and community facility space along Montgomery, Second and Grand Street.

Development Process

The process will have three concurrent tracks: community engagement and planning, design, and financing. Alembic will start each of these as soon as it has executed a development agreement with the City. It expects the initial community engagement process to last between three to six months; the design period to last between six to nine months; and the initial; and the initial financing and pre-construction period to extend between nine and 12 months.

Next Steps

City Council, after meeting with Alembic in August 2017, unanimously asked the City Manager's office to coordinate the drafting of a developer agreement in the Fall of 2017.

Following the ratification of that developer agreement, Alembic will undertake immediate stabilization of the DRC. This work, being planned now, is in direct consultation with the engineering firm Ryan Biggs |Clark Davis, who have been retained by the various past stewards of the DRC (including the City) for the last 15 years, most recently by the League and the City. Alembic is also consulting and consolidating all studies, reports, and work plans that have been done for the DRC and encourages anyone who may have further knowledge or documentation to share it so that a complete body of work done to date can be incorporated into the restoration. All work on the DRC, as a National Landmark and a contributing building in Newburgh's East End Historic District, will now and always be governed by and done in consultation with, SHPO.

Following the ratification of the developer agreement, Alembic will begin its comprehensive public participatory planning process with neighborhood residents and stakeholders to determine what end uses for the DRC and the rest of the project best align with the current and future needs of the neighborhood and the City of Newburgh as a whole.