

St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society



Annual Report

2000



St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

194 Crawford Street Toronto, Ontario M6J 2V6

Phone/fax (416) 539-7062

e-mail jonharstone@sympatico.ca

Charitable Registration Number: 87305-8192

May 15, 2001

To the Members and Supporters of St. Clare's

Please find attached a copy of St. Clare's Annual report.

2000 was a momentous year. It was a year of hard work, and enormous trials and tribulation. However, all our work finally resulted in the purchase of 25 Leonard on March 7, 2001. We are grateful to everyone who helped us turn our dreams into a reality. The staff at the City of Toronto were a constant source of support and assistance. A planning grant from the City of Toronto's Mayor's Homelessness Reserve Fund provided the initial funding that allowed the project to off the ground. Capital funding from the federal government's SCPI (Sustaining Community Partnerships Initiative) program ensured the project's ongoing viability. Finally, we would like to thank all the consultants who worked "on spec" and did not receive payment until after the project closed. Without their work, our project at 25 Leonard would never have happened.

We learned that it is possible to develop affordable housing without a lot of money or a government program. To do so, we needed the kind of faith that moves mountains as well as nerves of steel.

St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

Rev. Brian Burch
President

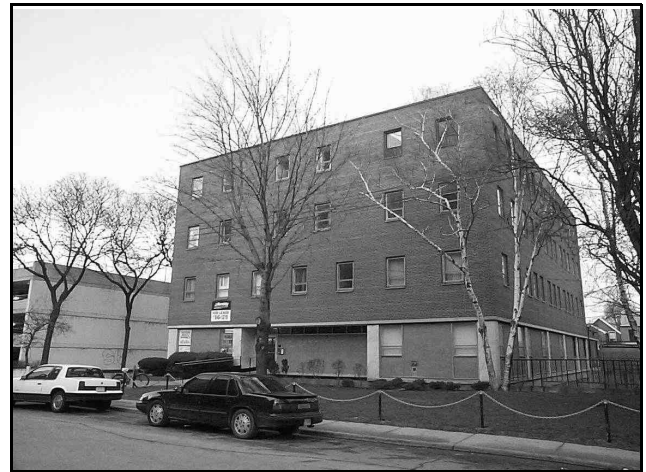
St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society

Annual Report 2000

25 Leonard Ave.

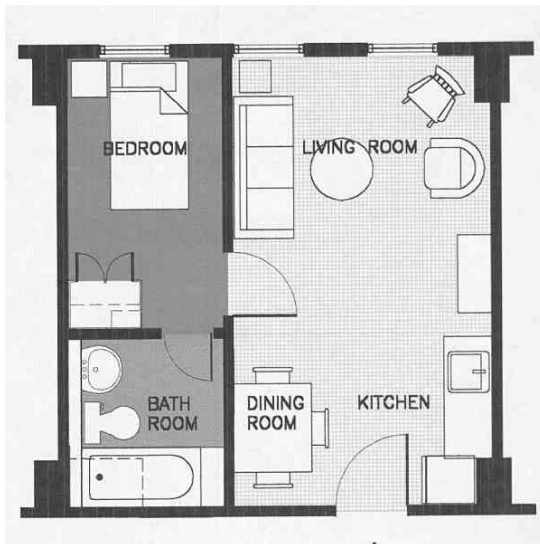
Our main focus for the year was the purchase of 25 Leonard Ave. The building was finally purchased on March 7, 2001, but it took most of 2000 to put together the financing and various municipal approvals. When the renovations are finished in November 2001, the building will provide 50 self-contained one-bedroom apartments for people currently living in shelters.

The building is centrally located. Leonard Ave. runs north-south along the east side of Toronto Western Hospital, near the corner of Bathurst and Dundas Streets.



25 Leonard Ave. The building is in excellent condition and easy to renovate. St. Clare's will convert it into 50 transitional housing units for people who are homeless.

25 Leonard Ave. is a 4-storey concrete medical office building built in 1960. When St. Clare's bought the building, it was less than 10% occupied.



25 Leonard Ave. The existing doctor's offices can be easily converted into 330 ft² one-bedroom apartments.

The building contains more than 28,000 square feet of useable space. The doctor's offices are about 330 square feet. This is an ideal size for a small one-bedroom apartment, and we will convert the offices into apartments by leaving the existing walls and adding a kitchen and bathroom. The building will contain a lounge (400 square feet), a meeting room (700 square feet) and three offices. Laundry facilities will be provided in the building. The building is wheelchair accessible and there is elevator access to all floors. In response to a request from our agency partners, one of the floors will be designated for women. The women's only floor will have additional security to guarantee the protection of these tenants.

The project's architect is Dean Goodman, with the architectural firm of Levitt Goodman. Dean has extensive experience designing housing for the homeless. Projects he has worked on include Strachan House and Eva's Phoenix.

The cost of buying and renovating 25 Leonard is approximately \$4.5 million. St. Clare's received a \$2.25 million grant from SCPI (Sustaining Community Partnerships Initiative). SCPI is a federal program that supports community projects that help people who are homeless. The City of Toronto will contribute over \$400,000 to 25 Leonard. In addition to waiving municipal fees and charges, the Mayor's Homelessness Reserve Fund contributed \$275,000 to the project. First National Financial Corporation is providing a \$1.5 million first mortgage, and the Canadian Alternative Investment Co-op (CAIC) is providing a \$150,000 second mortgage. The balance of the funds we need to develop the project will come from other government grants and fundraising.

The provincial government has agreed to provide rent supplements at 25 Leonard. All the tenants in the building will pay a rent-geared-to-their-income. Tenants on welfare will pay the shelter component included in their welfare cheque (\$325 per month). Tenants with jobs will pay 30% of their income for rent. The rent includes the utilities, but not cable TV or telephone.

St. Clare's has set up partnerships with several local agencies that run shelters. These agencies will refer tenants who are able to live independently to 25 Leonard.



25 Leonard Ave. Ground floor lobby with marble walls. The common areas are made of high quality, durable material.

Other Projects

Although most of our energy was focussed on the purchase of 25 Leonard, St. Clare's continued to look for existing buildings that could be converted into affordable housing.

In the spring, the Don Jail was declared surplus by the Province of Ontario, and St. Clare's applied to the City of Toronto for a \$25,000 grant to do a feasibility study to convert the jail into housing for people who are homeless. Our proposal was not accepted, but our action focussed attention on the possibility of converting underutilised government buildings such as the Don Jail into affordable housing.

In November, St. Clare's made an offer to purchase an apartment hotel near the corner of Queen and McCaul Streets. The building contained 54 furnished one- and two-bedroom apartments, which could be converted into transitional housing at a very minimal cost. Although our offer was not accepted, we were able to develop links with real estate agents who are looking for similar buildings.

Development Loan Fund

Establishing a Development Loan Fund continues to be a high priority for St. Clare's. One of the main reasons we were able to develop 25 Leonard is that we raised \$50,000 for the deposit using loan guarantees provided by two supporters. The deposit showed the Vendor we were serious, and that we had the ability to raise a significant amount of money. Having a substantial deposit gave us credibility. Our experience at 25 Leonard showed us how a Development Fund could operate, and 25 Leonard's success showed how important it is for groups to have timely access to money for a deposit.

From our discussions with other non-profit housing groups, the lack of funds to make an appropriate deposit is hampering their ability to acquire sites for housing. Creating a Development Loan Fund will facilitate the development of more affordable housing.

Advocacy

St. Clare's continued to support the activities of Toronto Action for Social Change in their efforts to get the federal and provincial governments to restore funding for affordable housing, and their linking of housing with peace and social justice issues through the Homes Not Bombs campaign.

Members of St. Clare's have actively supported other social justice initiatives including the Father's Day Coalition for Peace, Food Not Bombs, Interfaith Witness for Social Justice and Compassion, Rooftops Canada, Ten Days for Global Justice, and the Ecumenical Good Friday Coalition.

Staff

With the acquisition of 25 Leonard, St. Clare's has taken on more responsibilities, and we have hired staff to help us carry out the work.

Jon Harstone was hired, on a part-time basis, to be our General Manager. Jon has over 25 years of experience developing co-op and non-profit housing, including several projects without government assistance. Jon has managed a number of non-profit housing groups, including Colandco, the land trust for Toronto area co-ops.

Margo Davidson was hired as the Program and Community Resources Coordinator for 25 Leonard. Margo's ability to work with people and develop communities makes her an important member of the 25 Leonard team.