



Pierson School Redevelopment FAQs – Summer 2024

Learn more about the possible redevelopment of the Pierson School in Clinton into affordable, senior-preference rental apartments. (9/6/24)

Why is the Pierson School potentially being redeveloped into affordable, senior-preference, rental apartments?

In spring 2023, the Town of Clinton issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for plans to redevelop the Pierson School into affordable senior housing with a community use component. Development teams responded to this RFP with their proposed plans and in winter 2023 the Town Council chose the plan submitted by the development team lead by Xenolith Partners and HOPE Partnership.

Who are Xenolith Partners and HOPE Partnership?

Xenolith Partners is an experienced developer and owner of several rental communities, including many affordable units, in New York and Connecticut. HOPE Partnership is a local, mission-driven, 501(c)3-qualified non-profit organization that has worked to expand affordable housing in our region for 20 years. HOPE has developed affordable housing in Old Saybrook, Essex, and Madison.

What is senior-preference affordable housing?

Affordable housing can mean a few different things, but in this case, it means that the rental apartments that would be created would be reserved for households making up to a certain percentage of the area median income (AMI). The AMI is calculated by the federal government (HUD) and is based on our region. Affordable units are those reserved for households making up to 50% of AMI. For instance, the 50% of area median income threshold for a household of two in Clinton for 2024 is \$58,150. The “unit mix” or exact number of units, types of units (number of bedrooms, etc.), and the income thresholds, has not yet been finalized for the Pierson School redevelopment but the initial proposal is for approximately 50 studio and 1-bedroom units designated for households making up to 40-60% of AMI. Senior-preference means that those who are aged 62 and older, and who qualify according to their incomes, would be prioritized for these rentals over those who are younger than that age.

Can affordable housing be restricted to just people from a certain town or group of people?

No, affordable housing can not be created using public financing and then restricted to only people from a certain town or area. Likewise, affordable housing using public financing cannot be designed only to benefit a specific group, for instance, people who work for a specific company or organization.

What is the community use and who will be responsible for programming?

The development team proposed revitalizing the Pierson gymnasium and two front offices/classrooms (as well as bathroom facilities). This space would then be leased back to the Town of Clinton for \$1/year. The Town of Clinton would be responsible for programming this space, and plans to create areas to host programs and services for our community’s seniors.

What is going to happen to the gazebo, front lawn, and public access to the rear of the Pierson School?

The gazebo and the front lawn space will be remitted back to the Town and will continue to be Town-controlled property. This area will be used for community events, as it has been in the past. The lawn area directly behind the parking lot will be a part of the development site.

What about the field on the western side of Pierson?

The grassy area to the west of the school, which was previously used by the Pierson School as a playground area, is owned by the Adam Stanton House and, therefore, is not part of the development parcel.

What is going to happen to the parking spaces used by the public and neighbors?

There will still be parking available to members of the public and neighbors to use.

Will this development pay taxes?

Yes, the development team has proposed a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreement that would assume a 32-year term with \$0 taxes for the first two years (construction period) followed by taxes of \$500/unit starting upon issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy with 2% annual escalations over 30 years. This has not yet been finalized but it is usually a critical component of affordable housing development that there be some form of tax relief to offset lower-than-market rents.

When will these units be available to rent?

Assuming the development team gains site control in the summer of 2024, these units would likely be completed in early 2027.

What is “site control” and how does it happen?

The Town of Clinton will have to conduct a public vote to authorize the sale of the Pierson School property to the development team. The development team has proposed a purchase price of \$500,000.

Why is the proposed purchase price of the property \$500,000?

Because of historic preservation restrictions, there are quite limited options on how to optimize a property like Pierson. This means that the market value of a property like this is not actually as high as folks might initially think, because of the limited uses available and expensive restorations required. In addition, the front lawn, gazebo, and interior spaces for the Town’s senior programs provide ongoing value and service to the community, but restrict the developer’s use of the property.

Who is going to live at Pierson once it’s finished?

Given the senior-preference component of this community and the demographics of our region, it is likely that most, if not all of these rentals will be occupied by seniors. While we don’t know exactly who will apply to live here, our experience in this region with age-unrestricted housing suggests many if not most of the people interested in living here will have strong ties to Clinton and/or surrounding towns. Just like anyone else, people who live in affordable housing often want to stay in the town or region where they live and/or work, where they grew up or used to live, or where their friends and family live.

Additional Resources:

- HOPE Partnership, Inc.: www.HOPE-CT.org
- Xenolith Partners: <https://xenolithpartners.com/>
- CT Department of Housing: HUD income limits: [Rent and Income Limits Information](#)
- Town of Clinton: [Clinton - 2023 Town Profile \(clintonct.org\)](#)
- Middlesex United Way: [Housing | Middlesex United Way](#)