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MassHousing preserves affordability of Briston Arms with \$45.1 million loan

July 30, 2015 - Front Section

Low-Income families and senior citizens living in the 154-unit Briston Arms Apartments will see significant property improvements and the extension of affordability as a result of \$45.1 million in MassHousing financing.

Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) of Boston has acquired Briston Arms and plans to extend the federal Section 8 Housing Assistance rental subsidies on 73 of the apartments. An additional 46 apartments will receive new rental assistance subsidies and 35 of the apartments will continue to be rented at market rates.

The property had a mortgage loan that was scheduled to mature in 2018. At that point, affordability restrictions would have expired. As a condition of the loan, affordability will be maintained.

Located on Garden St., Briston Arms was originally financed by MassHousing and completed in 1973. There are 15 studio apartments, 44 one-bedroom apartments, 90 two-bedroom apartments and 5 three-bedroom apartments in six-multi-unit and townhouse-style buildings.

"Cambridge is one of the hottest real estate markets in the country right now," said MassHousing executive director Thomas Gleason. "Thankfully POAH, which has an excellent track record of preserving quality affordable rental housing, has purchased the property and will keep it affordable for the residents."

"POAH appreciates the support it received to acquire one of Cambridge's most highly visible and important affordable housing developments," said POAH president/CEO Aaron Gornstein. "This was a complex transaction and we would not have been successful in preserving the affordability of these apartments without the assistance of a range of partners at the local, state and federal level, including MassHousing."

Among the improvements anticipated for Briston Arms are new windows, storm doors, roofing and siding as well as masonry repairs. The property will also be brought into compliance with current accessibility requirements.

In addition to the MassHousing financing, which includes a \$35.8 million construction and permanent loan and a \$9.3 million bridge loan, the transaction involved tax credit equity raised from the sale of state and federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits as well as secondary loans totaling \$1.85 million from the City of Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust (CAHT).

The contractor will be NEI General Contracting and the architect is Davis Square Architects. The property manager will be POAH Communities. Work is expected to begin on the property in August. Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is a Boston-based nonprofit organization that owns and operates close to 9,000 affordable homes at 58 properties in nine states and the District of Columbia. POAH has rescued and restored some of America's most "at risk" rental housing and is known nationally for its ability to develop innovative financing structures and to close complex deals

which preserve long-term housing affordability for seniors, individuals with disabilities and families priced out of the housing market.

MassHousing (The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency) is an independent, quasi-public agency created in 1966 and charged with providing financing for affordable housing in Massachusetts. The Agency raises capital by selling bonds and lends the proceeds to low- and moderate-income homebuyers and homeowners, and to developers who build or preserve affordable and/or mixed-income rental housing. MassHousing does not use taxpayer dollars to sustain its operations, although it administers some publicly funded programs on behalf of the Commonwealth. Since its inception, MassHousing has provided more than \$18.5 billion for affordable housing.

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