

City's Studio Q making homeownership possible

WATERBURY

It's been two years since the city-based firm Studio Q Architecture won a design contest to build an energy-efficient home in a depressed section of Waterbury, and now it looks like the financing will come together to make it happen.

Officials at **Neighborhood Housing Services** of Waterbury, which hosted the contest in 2018, said the funding came in the form of tax credits from the Connecticut **Housing Finance Authority's Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program.**

HTCC provides tax credits to agencies, such as **Neighborhood Housing Services**, that build and rehabilitate low- and moderate-income **housing.** The agencies then sell those credits to private businesses and utility companies to reduce their tax liability.

"We will get an approval letter from CHFA stating we have a reservation for \$500,000 for this particular project," NHSW Executive Director Kevin Taylor said. "It's up to us to take that letter and find a buyer, someone who is willing to give us a check for \$500,000."

He said Eversource has historically been the go-to corporation to sell these credits to. While these particular credits have not yet been sold, he said, he anticipates they will, as NHSW has always found past buyers for them.

Should the credits be sold, much of the money will be used to build a house on a vacant lot at 145 Bishop St., at the corner of Crownbrook Drive. The rest will be used to

the homeowners' maintenance and utility expenses," he said. "We're also going to decrease their mortgage payment because they'll have the rental piece to it."

Studio Q Architecture first submitted a dollhouse version of the house in 2018, and at the time said its plans are to take advantage of the land's southward grade to improve energy efficiency. Through its placement on the land, the house will get the most out of sun exposure. Also, the design capitalizes on easterly winds that would create a "natural chimney effect" in the home, heating and cooling it more efficiently, it said at the time.

Ron Quicquaro, principal at Studio Q, said his team set out to design a two-family house that would fit in with the older, Queen Anne-style **housing of the neighborhood,** while also retaining a degree of modernity.

He said another important factor was the need for the two living spaces to provide a sense of autonomy for the residents.

On Tuesday, Quicquaro said he was pleased the funding might be in place soon.

"I couldn't be more excited ... it's a very thoughtful project that we spent a lot of time crafting," he said. "To finally see something that's been developed on paper and model form to become a place people can interact with and live with is one of the reasons why we do what we do."

Taylor said his goal is to create stronger communities in the North End, such as the historically

the project, Taylor said.



MIKE PATRICK

CITY BEAT



Architect Ron Quicquaro, left, and Kevin Taylor of Neighborhood Housing Services stand Tuesday outside a lot at 145 Bishop St. in Waterbury.

STEVEN VALENTI
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A rendering of the two-family house Studio Q Architecture plans to build at 145 Bishop St. in Waterbury.

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NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES OF WATERBURY

rehabilitate an existing house at 26 Beacon St., Taylor said.

transient and depressed Crownbrook **neighborhood**.

“The goal at the end of the day in anything we do, for the most part, is to provide homeownership opportunities,” Taylor said. “If we can increase the homeownership rate in the **neighborhood**, that increases the amount of people who are invested in the **neighborhood**.”

“There’s no question the **neighborhood** we chose is not the best **neighborhood** in the city,” Taylor said. “But what’s great about that particular **neighborhood** is they do have a strong **neighborhood** association. We’ve been working with them.”

To further their sense of investment, Taylor said, the two-family houses will provide rental income to the owner-occupier.

He said developments like this one are actually partnerships between the agency, the residents, the police department, other nonprofits and the city. Waterbury has committed \$175,000 to

“The goal is to reduce

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