



City of Plainfield

ELMWOOD GARDENS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
BLOCK 235, LOT 10
532 WEST SECOND STREET

December 4, 2014



Redevelopment Plan for Elmwood Gardens (Block 235, Lot 10) City of Plainfield, New Jersey

**In Accordance with the Local Redevelopment & Housing Law
(N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.)**

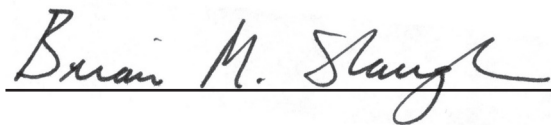
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Prepared for the
Mayor and City Council
and the City of Plainfield by

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SECTION 1

Introduction

Elmwood Gardens is a 119-unit, affordable garden-style apartment neighborhood, constructed in 1961 that is owned and operated by the Housing Authority of Plainfield. It is located on a 3.86 acre site at 532 West Second Street, between Plainfield Avenue and Elmwood Place (Block 235 Lot 10). The apartments are contained within four, three-story, brick buildings. The buildings and site conditions at Elmwood Gardens have deteriorated significantly over the years and these conditions have fostered criminal activity and destabilized the value of the surrounding neighborhood and properties.

On June 20, 2011 (Resolution R-227-11) the City of Plainfield City Council authorized the Planning Board to undertake a preliminary investigation and conduct a public hearing in order to determine whether or not the neighborhood known as Elmwood Gardens fulfilled the criteria for declaration as an “area in need of redevelopment”, according to the statutory requirements found in the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (“LRHL” codified at N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-1 et seq.). Pursuant to this directive, the Planning Board undertook such an investigation and summarized the findings within the preliminary investigation report, dated October 6, 2011 (prepared by Planning Director William Nierstedt, PP, AICP and Principal Planner Scott Bauman, PP, AICP). This study found that the conditions of Elmwood Gardens exhibited “...physical dilapidation, faulty design, instances of unsafe conditions, faulty arrangement...” Based on these findings, the opinion of the City Planning Division (as articulated in the Preliminary Investigation) was that the conditions found at Elmwood Gardens satisfied the criteria for an Area in Need of Redevelopment. Following the recommendation of the Planning Board, City Council designated Elmwood Gardens as an Area in Need of Redevelopment on December 12, 2011 (resolution # 422-11).

Clarke Caton Hintz has been retained by the Planning Board of the City of Plainfield to prepare a redevelopment plan for Elmwood Gardens that satisfies the requirements under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-7. This plan will set the stage for the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens for multi-family, affordable dwellings. Furthermore, the point of departure for the determination of the density and character of the dwellings and site will be the 2011 preliminary investigation report, since that report contains recommended densities. Ultimately, this Redevelopment Plan provides standards that will guide the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens in a manner that is consistent with community objectives for housing and good neighborhood design.



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SECTION 2

Redevelopment Plan Objectives

The Redevelopment Plan is intended to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens with an affordable housing complex consisting of flats, townhouses or stacked townhouses consistent with the following objectives:

1. Provide for the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens in a comprehensive, well-planned manner for the creation of affordable, family, rental dwellings;
2. Eliminate conditions in the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area that exhibit deterioration, dilapidation, faulty design and arrangements and unsafe conditions as demonstrated in the preliminary investigation;
3. Use the redevelopment process to create a physical environment that promotes safe and healthy living conditions, while discouraging crime within, and around, the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area;
4. Stabilize and enhance the value of surrounding neighborhood and properties through the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens;
5. Provide support for the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens through the tools afforded through the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law;
6. Create regulations for the redevelopment of Elmwood Gardens that provide a degree of flexibility while producing buildings, structures and arrangements that are sympathetic to the character of the existing neighborhood;
7. Establish a residential density for redevelopment of up to 16 dwelling units per acre;
8. Allow for lower parking ratios that reflect, statistically, lower automobile ownership and usage for residents of multi-family, low- and moderate-income homes that have good access to public transportation (bus, train).

SECTION 3

Development Regulations

3.1 Applicability

The following regulations shall apply to the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area, Block 235 Lot 10, and shall supersede regulations within Chapter 17 Land Use and Chapter 13 Streets and Sidewalks of the City of Plainfield, except where the regulations herein are silent, in which case the regulations within Chapter 17, Article IX Zone Controls - Supplemental Zoning Regulations and Article XI - Site Plan and Subdivision and Performance Standards shall govern.

3.2 Zoning Map

Block 235 Lot 10, which is currently designated as R-4 Moderate Density Residential, shall be designated as Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area on the zoning map (see page 4). The R-4 designation is hereby removed, such that the provisions of the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Plan represent the only applicable zone and shall not be construed to serve as an “overlay” zone.

3.3 Comprehensive Planning

Redevelopment of the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area shall be undertaken as a single, comprehensive plan that incorporates the entirety of the redevelopment area. Subdivision of land within the Redevelopment Area is not permitted, but a reduction of land due to required dedication for public purposes (i.e. street right-of-way) or the addition of land (i.e. right-of-way vacation) is permitted. This requirement does not foreclose the consideration of phasing of site development, but such phasing shall be at the sole discretion of the Planning Board during the site plan review process.

3.4 Permitted and Accessory Uses; Required Occupancy Restrictions

Permitted Principal Uses¹:

- I. Flats²
2. Townhouses
3. Stacked Townhouses²

¹ - As defined in Chapter 17 Land Use

² - Chapter 17 Land Use was amended with the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan ordinance to include definitions for these uses

Required Occupancy Restriction: Each household occupying a dwelling unit, with the exception of a manager or superintendent of the residential complex, shall conform to the income and other restrictions in the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 et seq.) and the Substantive Rules of the Council on Affordable Housing (N.J.A.C. 5:97) or any subsequent version of such controls/rules.

Permitted Accessory Uses:

1. Recreation and open space.
2. Off-street parking, including a garage for the manager/superintendent.
3. Leasing/landlord office.
4. Storage of maintenance equipment within a building;
5. Storage of personal items and effects within a building;
6. Storage of refuse and recycling within a roofed enclosure.
7. Fencing, walls, street furniture and mail kiosks.
8. Essential services³.

Required Accessory Uses:

1. One (1) dwelling unit for an on-site manager or superintendent.
2. Community room within a building; or, community center in a single building for exclusive use by residents.

Required Tenure: The tenure of the dwelling shall be rental. The dwelling units shall be administered by the Housing Authority of the City of Plainfield or affiliated entity.

³ - Chapter 17 Land Use was amended with the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan ordinance to include definitions for these uses

3.5 Density and Bulk Controls - Elmwood Gardens

The following density, area, yard, coverage and building relationship standards shall govern development within the redevelopment area:

Maximum Density	16 Dwellings Units per Acre
Maximum Number of Dwellings in Redevelopment Area	60 Dwellings
Maximum Number of Dwellings per Building	14
Minimum Lot Area	Equal to Minimum Tract Area
Minimum Lot Width	500 feet
Minimum Lot Frontage	500 feet
Minimum Lot Depth	140 feet
Minimum Front Yard Setback	15 feet
Minimum Setback for Side and Rear Yards	25 feet
Combined Side Yard Setbacks	50 feet
Maximum Building Coverage	50% (covered porches are excluded from calculation)
Maximum Impervious Coverage	75%
Maximum Building Height	
Principal buildings	45 feet or Three stories
Accessory buildings	24 feet or One story
Minimum Exterior Building Wall Offsets	
Front-to-Front:	50 feet
Front-to-Rear:	Prohibited Relationship
Front-to-Side:	45 feet
Side-to-Side:	15 feet
Side-to-Rear:	45 feet
Rear-to-Rear:	40 feet

3.6 Parking Controls

Minimum Required Parking

1. Multi-Family Dwellings: 1.0 parking spaces for every one (1) dwelling, rounded up to the nearest whole parking space.
2. Leasing/Landlord Office: Two (2) spaces.
3. Bicycle parking: 1 bicycle parking space per dwelling unit.
 - a. 25% of required bicycle parking spaces shall consist of bicycle lockers.
 - b. Bicycle parking spaces shall be located under roofed canopies.
 - c. Bicycle parking spaces shall be equally distributed throughout the site.

Minimum Parking Setbacks

1. Front Yard: 15 feet
2. Other Yard: 15 feet
3. From Building: 8 feet

Required Parking Buffer Width for Visual Screening

1. Front Yard: 6 feet of planted landscaping
2. Other Yard: 10 feet of planted landscaping

Parking Location and Design

1. All required parking generated by the redevelopment shall be accommodated on-site.
2. Any modification to existing on-street parking configurations shall be subject to review and approval by the City Engineer and City Council.
3. On-street parking configurations shall integrate with the existing system of adjacent public sidewalks, routes and crossings to maintain continuous public pedestrian access adjacent to streets.

Special Area Standards for Parking

The New Jersey Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) govern the minimum required number of parking spaces for residential development. The parking ratio for the dwellings within the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Plan represents a lower ratio than that which is called for in the RSIS. Such a ratio shall be approved by the local approving authority under N.J.A.C. 5:21-4.14 (c) upon demonstration that such standard better reflects local conditions.

Management

The owner of the residential complex shall employ an on-site manager or superintendent of the development.

Common Open Space

The layout of the site shall be designed with a reasonably rectangular common open space containing a minimum area of ten thousand square feet (10,000 sf.).

Refuse and Recycling

The site shall utilize one or two centralized refuse and recycling facilities for the residents of the complex. Such facility shall be appropriately screened from outside view by solid masonry walls and in accordance with [*Chapter 17:11 - 16.A.1*](#). The enclosure shall be accessed through solid welded steel gates or other durable material approved by the approving authority and roofed. In addition, the approving authority may require landscape plantings for additional buffering of the view the refuse and recycling facility.

Such facilities shall be adequately lighted as determined by the Planning Board during site plan review.

3.7 Building Requirements, Architecture & Efficient Design

The appropriate architectural reference for buildings within the redevelopment area shall be those buildings in the City of Plainfield that were constructed in the 19th and early 20th century. That is not to say that this plan seeks to re-create historic buildings, but that the scale, proportions and elements, particularly of facades, should be compatible with and complementary to traditional 19th and early 20th century architecture. These standards also seek to promote a durable and sustainable construction that will retain its initial integrity and reduce maintenance requirements over the lifetime of the buildings.

Unit Types

All dwellings in the redevelopment shall be one-, two-, or three-bedroom types.

Size of Dwellings

One-bedroom dwellings shall be a minimum of 750 sf., two-bedroom dwellings 900 sf. and three-bedroom dwellings 1,050 sf. in gross floor area.

Materials

All materials comprising exterior building components (siding, accents, roof, trim, etc.) shall be unified through a comprehensive palette.

Composition

Exterior building walls shall have a composition that embodies a traditional three-part elevation: base-middle-top.

Building Base

The base of each building shall have a finish of masonry: brick, stone, cast stone, stucco or a combination thereof.

Exterior Walls

The exterior walls of each building shall have a finish of masonry (brick, stone, cast stone, stucco), wood clapboard siding/trim, fiber-cement clapboard siding/trim, or a combination thereof. Clapboard siding shall not exceed an exposed width of eight (8) inches.

Entrances

Every dwelling unit shall have a separate primary entrance directly to the exterior without the necessity of utilizing a common hallway or stairway. The primary entrance shall face a street, the front façade of a building or a common open space.

Covered Access

Each dwelling unit shall have a porch⁴ or portico⁵ at its entrance. Up to two (2) dwellings may share a porch or portico.

Porch, Portico and Balcony⁵

Each first floor dwelling shall have a porch that may also be used for the covered access required in Covered Access, above. Each entrance to a dwelling on a second or higher floor shall be from a porch or portico at ground level. Each dwelling with a second floor shall have a balcony. Where the primary entrance to the dwelling is not covered by a porch, the entrance shall be covered by a portico. The minimum porch area shall be no less than six (6) feet deep from the front wall of the dwelling and no less than eight (8) feet in width. If a porch is shared by two or more dwelling units, the length of the porch shall be no less than fourteen (14) feet in length. A portico shall be no less than four (4) feet deep from the wall of the entrance and no less than four (4) feet in width. If a portico is shared by two or more dwelling units, the length of the portico shall be no less than eight (8) feet in length.

Roofs

Roofs shall be simply and symmetrically pitched and only in the configuration of gables and hips. The pitch of the roofs shall be built in a range from 7 in 12 and 12 in 12.

Windows

Windows shall be double-hung, operable and shall either have, or have the appearance of, traditional, divided-lites.

Energy Efficient Design

1. Appliances shall be “Energy Star” rated.
2. Buildings shall be designed to maximize energy efficiency through orientation, design, use of natural lighting and materials.
3. Building entrances shall be designed and oriented to avoid exposure to northwest winter winds.
4. Buildings or site elements shall incorporate recycled materials from the existing Elmwood Gardens complex.
5. Lighting shall consist of light emitting diode (LED) fixtures.
6. Existing shade trees and other significant vegetation should be protected during demolition and construction and preserved as part of the future site plan to the greatest extent possible.
7. Shade trees shall be planted in order to buffer solar exposure during summer.
8. Adequate heating, ventilating and air conditioning shall be integrated into each unit without generating the need for any portable mechanical equipment.

4 - As defined in *Chapter 17 Land Use*

5 - *Chapter 17 Land Use* was amended with the adoption of the Redevelopment Plan ordinance to include definitions for these uses

Security

Surveillance cameras shall be provided to ensure adequate coverage throughout the site/buildings. A diagram showing the coverage of cameras throughout the site shall be included with the site plan application. The front doors to individual dwelling units shall be visible from a public street or shall be secure by other means acceptable to the Planning Board.

Satellite Dishes

Each unit shall be provided with interior cabling to provide television, audio, internet and other similar services to residents without the necessity of exterior antennas. No exterior satellite dishes shall be permitted.

Laundry Facilities

Each dwelling shall be provided with an individual laundry area.

Accessibility

Flats shall conform to the NJ Barrier-Free Subcode. Pedestrian circulation throughout the site shall conform to the NJ Barrier-Free Subcode.

SECTION 4

Relationship of Redevelopment Plan to Local Planning & Objectives

This Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the 2009 Master Plan and Reexamination Report of the City of Plainfield. The Master Plan provides guidance through its policies and objectives for thoughtful redevelopment in a residential neighborhood. Objective 2 (page 14) states the following regarding redevelopment:

Development and redevelopment should be responsive to the needs of the Plainfield community by ameliorating conditions suggestive of physical and economic deterioration, by supporting sustainability, creating economic opportunity and providing a variety of housing. Redevelopment planning is to be implemented in a comprehensive city-wide manner and where appropriate to promote transit oriented design.

Redevelopment of the site is also consistent with Policy 3.1 (page 14) regarding vacant and boarded dwellings, which include many of the units at Elmwood Gardens:

It is policy and a continued priority of the city to eliminate the presence of all vacant and boarded structures through rehabilitation, redevelopment, enforcement of the Abandoned Properties Ordinance, and where necessary, demolition.

Consistent with the herein zoning regulations, the Master Plan and Reexamination Report recommends increased density on the site (page 42):

Area centered on Plainfield Avenue, West Fourth Street, Central Avenue, the NJ Transit railroad tracks and Elmwood Place

Block 105, Lot 1, Block 106, Lots 1-10, Block 107, Lots 16-18, Block 108, Lot 1, Block 771, Lot 1, and Block 235, Lot 10 are currently in the moderate density residential land use pattern and R-4 zone. The majority of uses in this area are apartment complexes at a much high density than the pattern or zone calls for. This plan recommends the designation of a higher density land use pattern.

The Master Plan and Reexamination Report addresses Elmwood Gardens directly on page 35 and recommends that the site be rezoned to permit a “higher density land use pattern”.

The Housing Authority of Plainfield (HAP) also made a presentation to the PB outlining their future plans. They advised of their intention to demolish the existing Elmwood Gardens housing units on West Second and Elmwood Streets and to construct townhouse units. Neither the existing nor the proposed housing densities are consistent with the land use or zone plan. The Board reviewed the presentation and recognized that the Elmwood Gardens, Whitney Young Apartments, West End Gardens and Liberty Village housing complexes are all located in the moderate density residential land use pattern which calls



for development of one and two family dwellings. This land use pattern is not appropriate for all of these existing uses. In an effort to make the land use pattern more consistent with the existing housing density in the area, and to create a more appropriate buffer between the mixed use land use pattern to the east and the moderate density residential land use pattern to the west, this land use element recommends that the land use pattern for the above identified areas be changed to a higher density land use pattern.

The Master Plan and Reexamination Report defines high density residential development on page 29 of the Master Plan and Reexamination Report:

The high density residential development pattern calls for a density of 18-24 units per acre and includes the multi-family apartment pattern in the northeastern section of the city along East Front Street.

While not included as an affordable housing site in the 2009 Fair Share Plan, the Redevelopment Plan, which requires all dwellings to be affordable housing units (with the exception of a manager's unit), is consistent with the intent of the Fair Share Plan which strives to satisfy the City's affordable housing obligation. While the third round affordable housing obligation is not known at this time, the affordable housing units being created pursuant to this Redevelopment Plan will provide credits which the City can use to satisfy its affordable housing obligation.

SECTION 5

Relationship of Redevelopment Plan to Statewide, County and Surrounding Municipal Planning & Objectives

This Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the New Jersey State Plan, County Master Plan and the master plans of surrounding municipalities.

NJ State Plan

In 1986, the New Jersey Legislature passed the New Jersey State Planning Act, which created the State Planning Commission and required the preparation and adoption of the State Plan. The most current adopted plan is dated March 1, 2001. The purpose of the State Plan is to:

Coordinate Planning Activities and establish statewide planning objectives in the following area: land use, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resource conservation, agriculture and farmland retention, recreation, urban and suburban redevelopment, historic preservation, public facilities and services and intergovernmental coordination. (N.J.S.A. 52:18A-200(f), the state planning act)

The state plan uses a policy map to differentiate areas from highest growth to lowest growth based on information, such as natural resources, sewer availability, etc. These differentiations are called planning areas, which range from PA-1 Metropolitan to PA-8 State park.

Plainfield is situated within Planning Area 1 Metropolitan Planning Area. The State Plan envisions this Planning Area to be a place where growth and redevelopment is promoted. The intent of the State Plan is to direct growth and development into areas served by public infrastructure as a means of more efficiently using public resources. This overarching goal has been consistent since the first State Plan was adopted in 1987. This means that municipal efforts to promote growth should be met with support, from both a financial

and regulatory perspective, by the State. Elmwood Gardens, as a multi-family residential community, is not inconsistent with the policies of the State Plan and should be supported at the State level.

The State Development and Redevelopment Plan is in the process of revision, but it is not anticipated that the designations or policies relating to Plainfield or Elmwood Gardens will change.

Union County Master Plan

The Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Union County Master Plan. The program of rehabilitation and renovation is consistent with the development recommendations contained therein, such as those promoting housing opportunities for those of all income levels.

Surrounding Municipalities

Plainfield is surrounded by eight municipalities in three counties; those in Union County include Scotch Plains and Fanwood, those in Somerset County include Watchung, North Plainfield and Greenbrook and those in Middlesex County include Dunellen, South Plainfield and Piscataway. The Redevelopment Area, located in the northern part of the City, is not adjacent to any surrounding municipality but is nearest to the Borough of North Plainfield.



The portion of North Plainfield which is nearest to the Elmwood Gardens site is zoned Residence-3 (R-3) and Historic District Residence district (H-2). The residential use in the Redevelopment Plan is not inconsistent with these two residential districts located to the northwest. The R-3 district permits single family homes on 6,000 square foot lots and two-family homes on 7,500 square foot lots. The H-2 district also permits one and two family homes with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet and 7,500 square feet,

respectively. While the proposed density is not consistent with the density of these single-family home districts, given the distance to Elmwood Gardens there is no anticipation of negative impacts that would result from the site's redevelopment. Furthermore, removal of problematic conditions on the site may be beneficial to the surrounding area.

SECTION 6

General Provisions

Redevelopment Authority

The City Council shall act as the “Redevelopment Authority” pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A-12A-4.c* for purposes of implementing this Redevelopment Plan and carrying out redevelopment projects. In doing so, the City Council shall have the powers set forth in *N.J.S.A. 40A-12A-8* to effectuate all of its duties and responsibilities in the execution and implementation of this Redevelopment Plan.

Planning Board Review

Development review shall be conducted by the Plainfield City Planning Board pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1*, et seq. Any deviation from “Section 3 Development Regulations” shall constitute a variance. The Plainfield City Planning Board may grant deviations from the strict application of the regulations contained within this Redevelopment Plan in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A. 40:55D-60* and *-70c*, with the exception that the Planning Board may not grant deviations to allow market rate residential units (excluding a manager's unit).

Acquisition of Property

As the property within the Redevelopment Area is currently owned by the Plainfield Housing Authority, no property is proposed to be acquired by public entities in the Elmwood Gardens Redevelopment Area as part of this Redevelopment Plan. Notwithstanding, this Redevelopment Plan shall not preclude acquisition of property outside the Redevelopment Area.

Relocation Provisions

No property acquisition will be undertaken by a governmental entity or utilizing governmental funds pursuant to this Redevelopment Plan. Consequently, there would be no displacement of either residents or businesses that requires a Workable Relocation Assistance Program under *N.J.A.C. 5:11-1* et seq.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that residents will not be displaced to off-site locations during building renovations. The existing vacancies in the neighborhood will be renovated first and subsequently occupied by new and continuing residents as other buildings undergo renovation.