



McElwain School Apartments Update 09/20/23

Capstone Communities and MPZ Development Celebrate the Grand Opening of The McElwain School

Apartments Reimagined Former School Site has been Transformed into a Vibrant, Sustainable Mixed-Income Community

Yesterday, MPZ Development LLC (MPZ) and Capstone Communities LLC (Capstone) joined the Town of Bridgewater, state and local officials, and the Greater Bridgewater Community to celebrate the grand opening of The McElwain School Apartments, a new mixed-income housing apartment community located at 242-250 Main Street, just outside Bridgewater's vibrant town center and bustling Route 28 corridor. At a time when the need for high-quality, mixed income housing has never been higher, the reimaged McElwain School site has delivered 57 units of housing, a remarkable 51 of which are affordable for families earning at or below 60% of the Annual Median Income (AMI).

Designed by Prellwitz/Chillinski Associates, The McElwain School Apartments meld historic preservation and modern sustainability, encompassing both a former school building, which sat vacant for over 20 years, as well as a newly-built residential component that is the first Passive House multifamily building (PHIUS) to open in Plymouth County. The \$28.9M development received \$10.6M in state and federal historic tax credits, the first-ever state and federal historic tax credits awarded in the Town of Bridgewater's history, as well as \$1.345M in Bridgewater Community Act Preservation funding. The McElwain School Apartments' 57 apartments include 13 one-bedroom units, 36 two-bedroom units, and 8 three-bedroom units as well as numerous amenities including onsite management and maintenance, a dog park, a natural playground for children, a community room, and a wildflower bee meadow.

The McElwain School Apartments' name pays homage to William H. McElwain (1867-1908), the founder of the William H. McElwain Shoe Company, a shoe manufacturer that was one of the major employers in Bridgewater at the turn of

the 20th century. In a nod to William McElwain's business, MPZ and Capstone commissioned internationally-renowned steampunk artist Bruce Rosenbaum to create an intricate metal sculpture of a flying shoe that sits outside the school building's main doors.

"We are incredibly grateful to our project partners and funders who helped make our vision for a vibrant sustainable, mixed-income community at the McElwain School Apartments a reality," said Mathieu Zahler, Principal of MPZ Development and Jason Korb, Principal of Capstone Communities. "This former elementary school site will once again serve as a tremendous asset to the Greater Bridgewater community and provide high-quality housing options at rent levels that hard-working families can afford."

"McElwain School Apartments is a beautiful, adaptive reuse project providing 57 new units of much-needed housing within walking distance of downtown Bridgewater," said Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Ed Augustus. "Mixed-income developments like McElwain School Apartments are necessary to meet the housing needs of working families and EOHLC was proud to support this project with a combination of State and Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits and \$6.4 million in additional financing."

"This project has shown our residents that a building reuse project can be done professionally, expertly, and result in critically needed housing options for residents of Bridgewater," said Michael Dutton, Town of Bridgewater Town Manager. "It has also shown the value of designating historic structures because without the historic tax credits, this project could not have happened."

"This project highlights the value of working proactively with quality developers to bring high quality housing to fruition," said Erik Moore, Town of Bridgewater Council President. "We worked hand-in-hand with Matt and Jason from beginning to end. Once they saw our commitment, they doubled down on their efforts to make this work. The result is high quality housing for Bridgewater residents."

"The McElwain School Apartments not only provides housing in an ideal location, but also preserves a historic building in the community," said Moddie Turay, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation. "The MHIC team is incredibly proud to have supported this project. We also hope that it will further inspire additional historic property redevelopment in Bridgewater and across the Commonwealth, where there are many beautiful, but aging properties, that could be transformed into wonderful homes for many deserving families."

"This is yet another example of the kind of development we strive to support, creative use of a historic property to address the critical need for housing in the state," said Clark Ziegler of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. "Strong local support and developers who work with the community to preserve a local landmark took McElwain School Apartments from concept to completion."

"The Life Initiative is proud of our role in this project, providing \$6.5 million in support; from the early stages, with acquisition and predevelopment loans, through today and beyond with a portion of the construction financing," said Kristen Harol, President of The Life Initiative. "This project is another wonderful example of creativity and hard work resulting in beautiful affordable homes for the community. Our relationship with the development team will hopefully assist in many more similar projects come to fruition throughout the Commonwealth".

The McElwain School Apartments were funded through a mix of state, local, and low-income housing tax credit funding sources. In addition to the state and federal historic tax credits and Community Preservation funding, the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation (MHIC) issued a \$15 million construction bridge loan to the McElwain School Apartments in which The Life Initiative participated.

The Cape Cod Five Savings Bank purchased the project's State Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and the New York Life Insurance Company purchased the project's State Historic Tax Credits. The Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) provided \$600,000 in financing for the Project. The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) provided the State and Federal Low Income Housing Tax credits and \$6.4 million in loans for the development. The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) provided a \$5.3 million permanent loan for the project.



Photo: Andy Ryan Photography

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