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PROJECT:
1560 West Pierce street

DISTRIBUTION:
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Project Narrative 1560 West Pierce Street Housing

Project: The renovation of Milwaukee Paper Box Company, located at 1560 West Pierce Street, into affordable family housing will have a major impact on the City and specifically this neighborhood at the most western edge of Walker's Point and the eastern edge of Clark Square. Once in motion, this redevelopment will be able to showcase yet another Milwaukee jewel. As the developer for this project, Sherman Associates, is preparing and documenting information on the building to seek historic tax credits, WHEDA tax credits, and host of other financing strategies. Sherman Associates is currently working with an historical expert that has uncovered this building's history and is ready to apply for Historic Preservation Certification Part 1, and has received approval. The effect of this research, of course, will be restoring this beautiful building and discovering more stories about our city's industrial past and the way it evolved during the turn of last century.

This five to six story reinforced concrete building was built in 1919-1920. Its red brick veneer façade is divided into bays by slightly projecting pilasters. They are trimmed with modest limestone ornamentations in the form of sill course above the first story and simple carved cartouche-like elements. The entrance which consists of a modern aluminum and glass door is setback within a limestone surround. A parapet with limestone coping retains panels that feature the Brian Built Boxes Company logo with Milwaukee Paper Box Company superimposed over a green-colored box.

The community will benefit from this 70 to 75 unit family rental development consisting of a mix of 3-, 2- and 1-bedroom units. The emphasis will be on developing more of the three bedroom units to support the work force families in the area in need of housing. The units are being developed to largely address work force housing; however a mix of units will be set aside as market rate apartments. Existing large fenestrations on the building with generous spans of glazing will create open and lit apartment units with access to views and fresh air on every floor in all directions. From upper floors of this building, there are some fabulous views of Menomonee Valley, Clark Square, and even lake views that are breathtaking. The interior floor plate is very deep and positioning the apartments around the exterior perimeter leaves excess interior space on each floor that can be developed for larger apartments, as well as resident uses such as play areas, laundry facilities, common /lounge areas, and storage. The project scope will include surface parking as well as parking inside the building on the lowest floor accessible via a frontage road to 16th Street, and an existing overhead door currently provides vehicle access to the lowest floor.

The Plan for Transforming the Neighborhood/Revitalizing the Community:

Sherman Associates is planning to find a partner that can provide an on-site resident resource center that can provide the Pierce Street Family Housing community with the support services they need to build community, encourage self-sufficiency for the families, and support academic achievement for the children. This redevelopment is about creating quality housing and related amenities, as well as site improvements that will stand independently as another signature Sherman Associates urban neighborhood housing community. To its great advantage, this development is also an integral part of a broader community revitalization initiative spearheaded by Layton Boulevard West Neighbors Association and the Clark Square neighborhood made possible by the Zilber Initiative which has been a catalyst to bring together residents, educators, business owners, and nonprofit leaders to envision the future of their neighborhoods.

Throughout 2010, and into 2011, hundreds of people who live and work in these neighborhoods participated in comprehensive community planning, led by their neighborhood associations. The utmost concern has been to provide a safe place to live and live in quality housing. Absentee landlords and decrepit environments of units have been the biggest issues for residents in this community. Pierce Street development is going to be a wonderful catalytic project to boost quality housing for hardworking families that need affordable housing.

As such, Pierce Street redevelopment for housing is envisioned as a part of a continuum of activities to rebuild the infrastructure of the surrounding neighborhood. Clark Square is a neighborhood of many riches. One of the most diverse communities in Milwaukee, it is home to Journey House, a community-based organization that strengthens families, as well as service agencies such as the Milwaukee Christian Center and the Lao American Organization. A gateway to Milwaukee's near south side, Clark Square and its Quality Life Plan Map has identified the corner where Milwaukee Paper Box Company is located on 1560 West Pierce as the gateway to Clark Square. This redevelopment creates a unique boost for Clark square to realize its physical landmark.

The rejuvenation of Milwaukee Paper Box Company building into a family housing, provides the opportunity to create landmark quality gateway for one of the emerging economic engines of Menomonee Valley and Clark Square.