

Anna Louise Inn's new era begins by 'seeing the good'

New building to be built at Mount Auburn site

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Dignitaries break ground on the new Anna Louise inn on Reading Road in Mount Auburn, to be completed in the spring of 2015. / The Enquirer/Gary Landers

The Anna Louise Inn to be built in Mount Auburn was hailed Thursday as a testament to perseverance. Supporters of the project said the new facility helps continue a more than 100-year-old legacy of providing affordable housing in the community.

Officials from Cincinnati Union Bethel, the city and companies involved in the project met Thursday to celebrate the beginning of construction on the \$14 million project. Before the ceremonial groundbreaking, more than 80 people listened to speakers for about an hour and touted the importance of the project and the local, state, federal partnerships required to make it happen while at the United Way of Greater Cincinnati headquarters.

The new Anna Louise Inn will feature a four-story building that has 85 studio apartments, residential dormitory-style units for CUB's Off the Streets program and community space. The building will also serve as the main offices for the nonprofit social services agency Cincinnati Union Bethel, which runs the Anna Louise Inn and provides affordable housing for single women.

<http://news.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?NoCache=1&Dato=20140130&Kategori=BIZ&Lopenr=301300126&Ref=AR>

Residents are expected to move from the current site in Lytle Park to 2401 Reading Road after the facility is complete in spring 2015. The inn has operated at its current location since 1909.

“There’s really just a sense of seeing the good in the future and the positive energy that moved this forward and allowed it to happen,” said Mary Carol Melton, executive vice president of Cincinnati Union Bethel, while standing on the new Anna Louise Inn property. The United Way is across the street from the Anna Louise Inn site.

Model Group and Over-the-Rhine Community Housing are developing the new Anna Louise Inn.

Initially, the Anna Louise Inn project began as discussions about making renovations to the current site in 2010. W&S attempted to buy the property unsuccessfully and later sued to block a \$12 million redevelopment project.

In May, Western & Southern Financial Group agreed to pay Cincinnati Union Bethel \$4 million for the Anna Louise Inn property in hopes of developing the site and area near Lytle Park. The agreement ended a high-profile battle that drew wide attention in the community.

About 50 women live at the Anna Louise Inn currently, Melton said. She said the new facility will benefit the women who live at the Anna Louise and she’s proud that the support for affordable housing can continue in Cincinnati.

No speaker at the event actually mentioned Western & Southern or directly referenced the dispute. Cincinnati City Councilman Wendell Young said it has been “disconcerting and a little tough” to know they couldn’t remain where they were, but it’s nice to know they will be welcome where they are going to be. ■



Participants view the drawings of the new Anna Louise Inn being built in Mount Auburn during groundbreaking ceremonies Thursday at United Way of Greater Cincinnati. / The Enquirer/Gary Landers

Next steps at Downtown site

What’s up with the current Anna Louise Inn site? The property at 300 Lytle St. will remain the home of residents of the Anna Louise Inn until construction is completed on the new building. Western & Southern Financial Group is then expected to obtain the 79,110-square-foot property. W&S has said it’s considering a new headquarters, hotel or condominium development in Lytle Park. It also has considered converting the Broadway Parking Garage into residences and identifying sites for new restaurants, including one in the former police station at 314 Broadway.

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