

## **Middletown Supportive Housing**

**Priority: Home!**, a recently released plan from HUD mandated by President Clinton last year, cites the "enduring successes of supportive housing" and the "positive strengths of the not-for-profit providers"; but bemoans the fact that "... although of proven promise ... supportive housing options remain in scarce supply".

**The State of Connecticut and Corporation for Supportive Housing**, a national foundation, also recognize the values of supportive housing - and the strengths of the non-profit sector in providing it - by funding a "Supportive Housing Demonstration Project" in Connecticut, in order to develop successful models which can be duplicated statewide and nationwide.

In Middletown, a consortium of not-for-profit agencies and interested citizens, with representation from the City, formed to apply for both the State Demonstration Project, and the Federal rent subsidy, "Shelter Plus". Under the leadership of The Connection Fund, Inc.,(TCF) **Middletown Supportive Housing** was chosen as one of twelve projects in ten communities, to develop forty units of supportive housing in the former Arriwani Hotel. TCF was also awarded forty Shelter Plus rent subsidies, twenty of which are assigned to the supportive housing project, and twenty to be used in scattered sites. Of the forty units in the former hotel, twenty will be for people with special needs, and the remainder for low income individuals with no identified support needs.

**The Arriwani Hotel** is a significant structure in the North End of Middletown containing 35,080 square feet of usable space on five floors. It has provided permanent and transitional housing in Middletown since 1914; but currently, is functionally and economically obsolete. Designed originally as an upscale hotel near the Railroad Station, and reconfigured in 1988 to provide 76 SRO housing units, the building currently has less than twenty residents plus a store-front church. The units are small single rooms of approximately 175 square feet, with common bathrooms on each floor. There are no kitchen facilities or common spaces for the residents, and the top two floors are currently closed owing to leaks in the roof. Due to poor management and deteriorating physical conditions over the past ten years, the facility is perceived as a negative source of activity in the North End; and it carries a strong stigma which needs to be corrected. On the other hand, despite this, the building is a handsome historic structure which, with careful renovation and good management, can provide a safe and vital residential/commercial/service-oriented environment, which can be a true asset to downtown Middletown, instead of a perceived liability.

What is **Supportive Housing**? Basically, it is permanent rental housing, secured by annual leases, which has access, on site, to social services. These are provided through individual case workers who are in daily touch with the tenants; who help connect them to the vast array of services available in Middletown; and who also supply recreational and vocational opportunities. It is not a treatment center or a homeless shelter.

**The renovation of the former Arriwani Hotel and use of Shelter Plus subsidies as designed by The Middletown Supportive Housing Project will accomplish the following goals:**

- It will eliminate conditions of unacceptable urban blight by replacing 76 deteriorated SRO units with 40 new, furnished, efficiency apartments.
- It will address the problem of loitering by the residents by offering over 2000 square feet of lobby, library, active recreational, and multi-purpose spaces within the building, plus an enclosed landscaped courtyard to the rear.
- It will remove the stigma for both its residents and the community by providing strong security measures, excellent management, fiscally responsible operations, and caring and consistent social support services, in order to help its tenants become good citizens and neighbors.
- It will provide a new and refreshing retail presence on Main Street - consistent with the goals of the City's Downtown Plan, Urban Renewal Plan and the goals of the emerging Downtown District. The retail space is 1,120 square feet.
- It will further address the perceived "problem" of this blighted corner by moving the residential and staff entrance to Liberty Street; by the careful screening of tenants by management, and of visitors at the security desk; and by offering many opportunities for socialization, recreation and dining within the building.
- It will provide other service-needy individuals and families in Middletown with twenty units of scattered site permanent supportive housing, through "Shelter Plus". These will also be supported by the same high quality management and social service providers as are available at the former hotel.

**Scope:**

The scope of the renovation is vast. All five floors will be "gutted" and rebuilt in an entirely new configuration with new mechanical systems. The units will be approximately 385 square feet, and have private bathrooms and kitchenettes. Common spaces will include a small sitting area on each floor; a large multi-purpose/dining area with kitchen on the second floor as well as a laundry; and rec-room, library, lobby, security desk, vestibule, and retail store on the ground floor. Additionally, offices for both management and support services will be available through the Liberty Street entrance via an access separate from that used by the residents.

The unsafe, unsanitary, and dangerous "warren" of corridors, SRO's and fire escapes that is the Arriwani today, will be replaced by a clean, safe, well-managed apartment building that is the "Liberty Place"? "Forest City Place"? ? Eight Liberty Street ?of tomorrow.

### Financing

This \$3.5 million project is financed through thirty year mortgages from DOH and CHFA, and private capital raised through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. The cost of the renovation is estimated at \$2.6 million; while the tax credits will be reserved to fund the anticipated operating deficit caused by the sponsor's requirement for full time security.

Funding from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston is being sought for the purchase and development of property to the rear of the hotel. This property will be able to provide parking and a private courtyard for staff and residents.

### Management

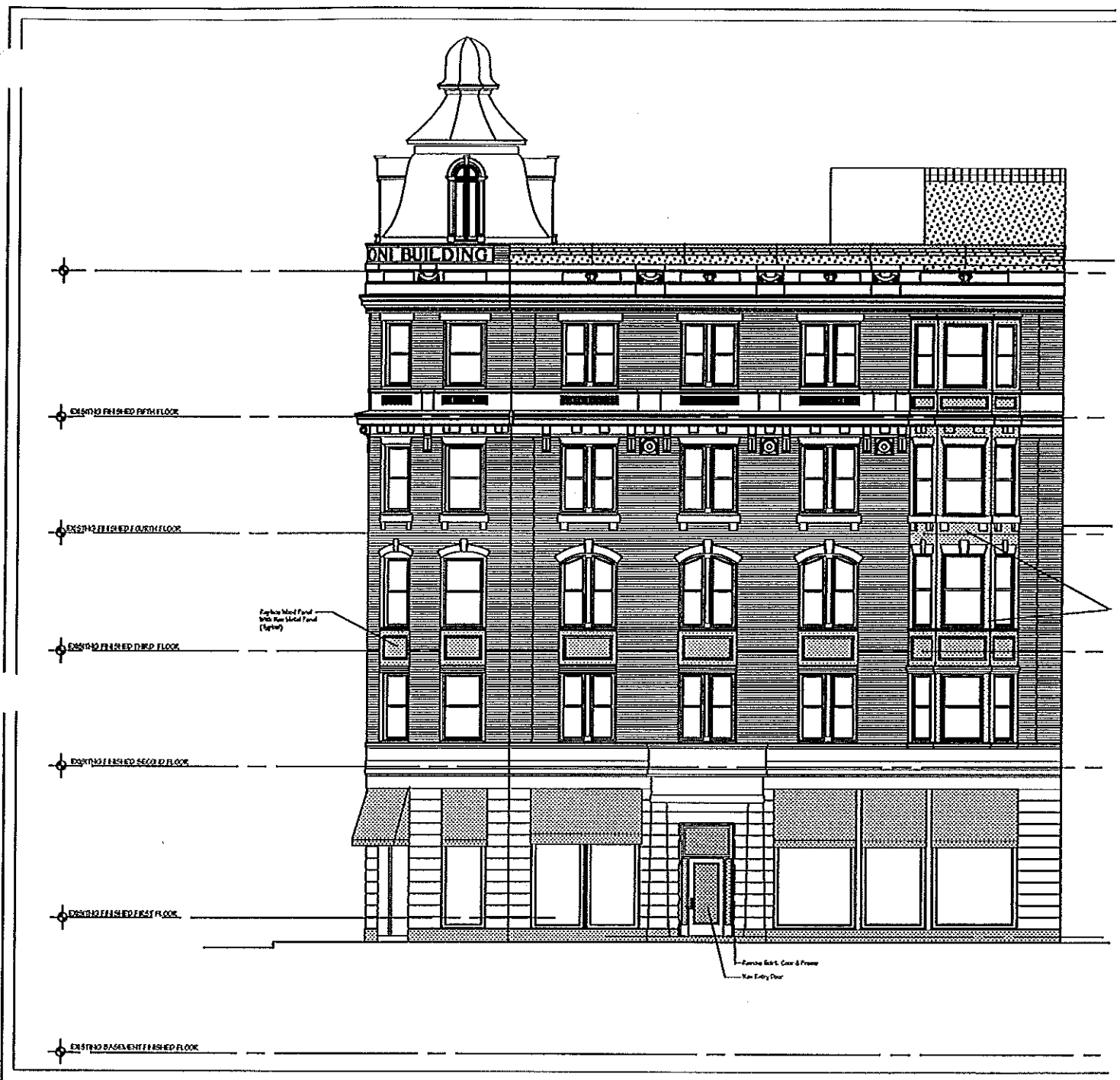
Although backed by a larger group of agencies including River Valley Services, Rushford Center, CT Legal Services, City of Middletown Municipal Development Office, American Red Cross, Gilead House and Mercy Housing and Shelter Corp., the three main players in this project are:

TCF, Inc.	Developer, future general partner
YMCA	Manager
St. Vincent dePaul Place	Social Service Provider

The "Y" and "St. Vincent's" will be under contract to TCF to provide management and social services. Those contracts are renewable and can be terminated if services received are not acceptable. TCF also plans to retain its links with the larger consortium of agencies in order to assist with policy issues, and to serve as a linkage with the larger community. It also plans to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to help with issues specific to the North End and the Downtown District.

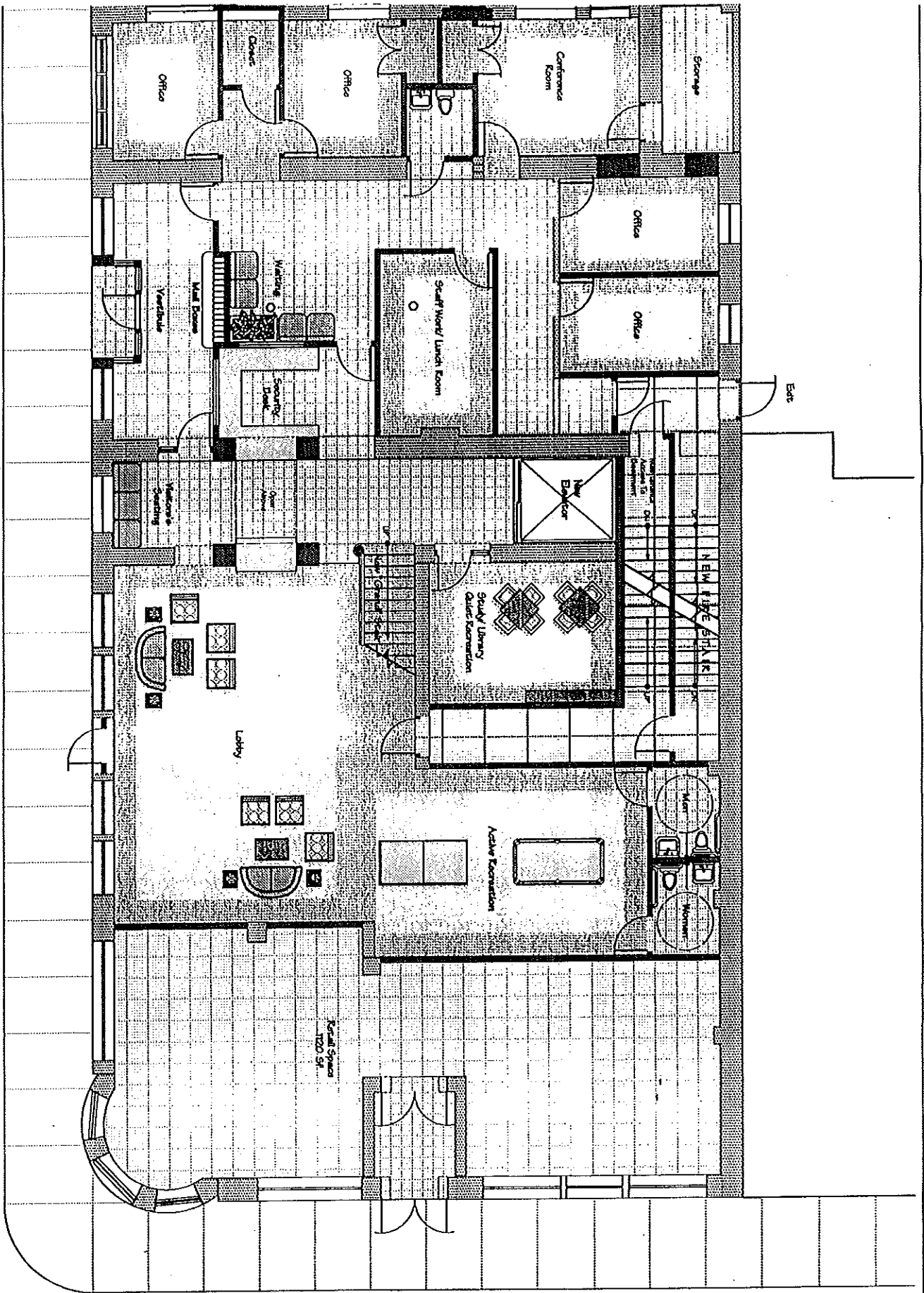
### Relocation

Current tenants of the "Arriwani" will be relocated during the construction period - estimated to be October 1994 through October 1995 - and will be offered the opportunity, but not the requirement, of returning to the "new" building. The Church will be offered assistance in finding a permanent relocation. Management and support services from the YMCA and St. Vincent dePaul Place will be available to the temporarily relocated tenants.



**RENOVATIONS OF THE ARRIWANI HOTEL**  
**MIDDLETOWN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING COALITION**

**BIANCO·GIOLITTO ARCHITECTS - MIDDLETOWN CT MAY 1994**



LIBERTY STREET

MAIN STREET

FIRST FLOOR

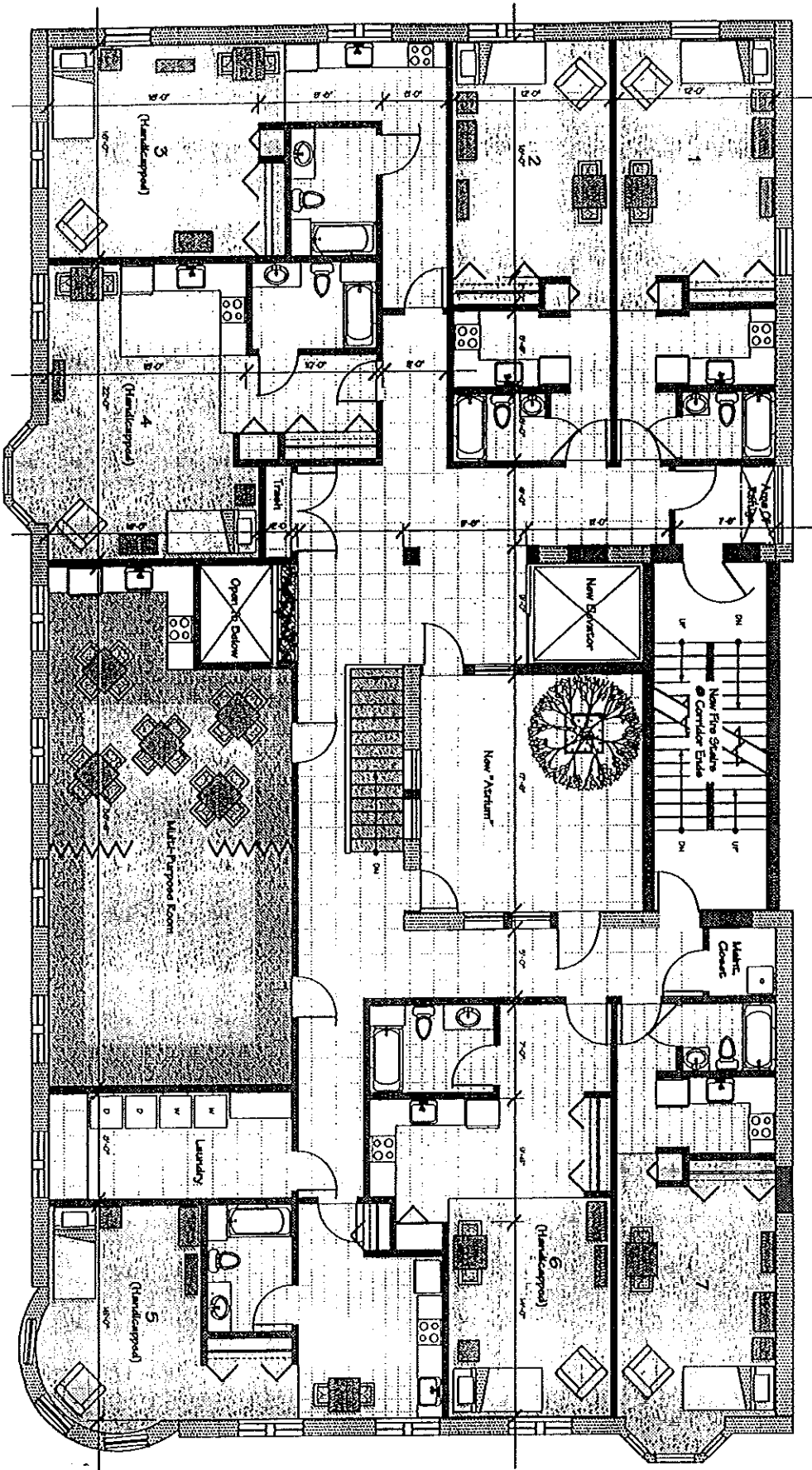
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MIDDLETOWN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

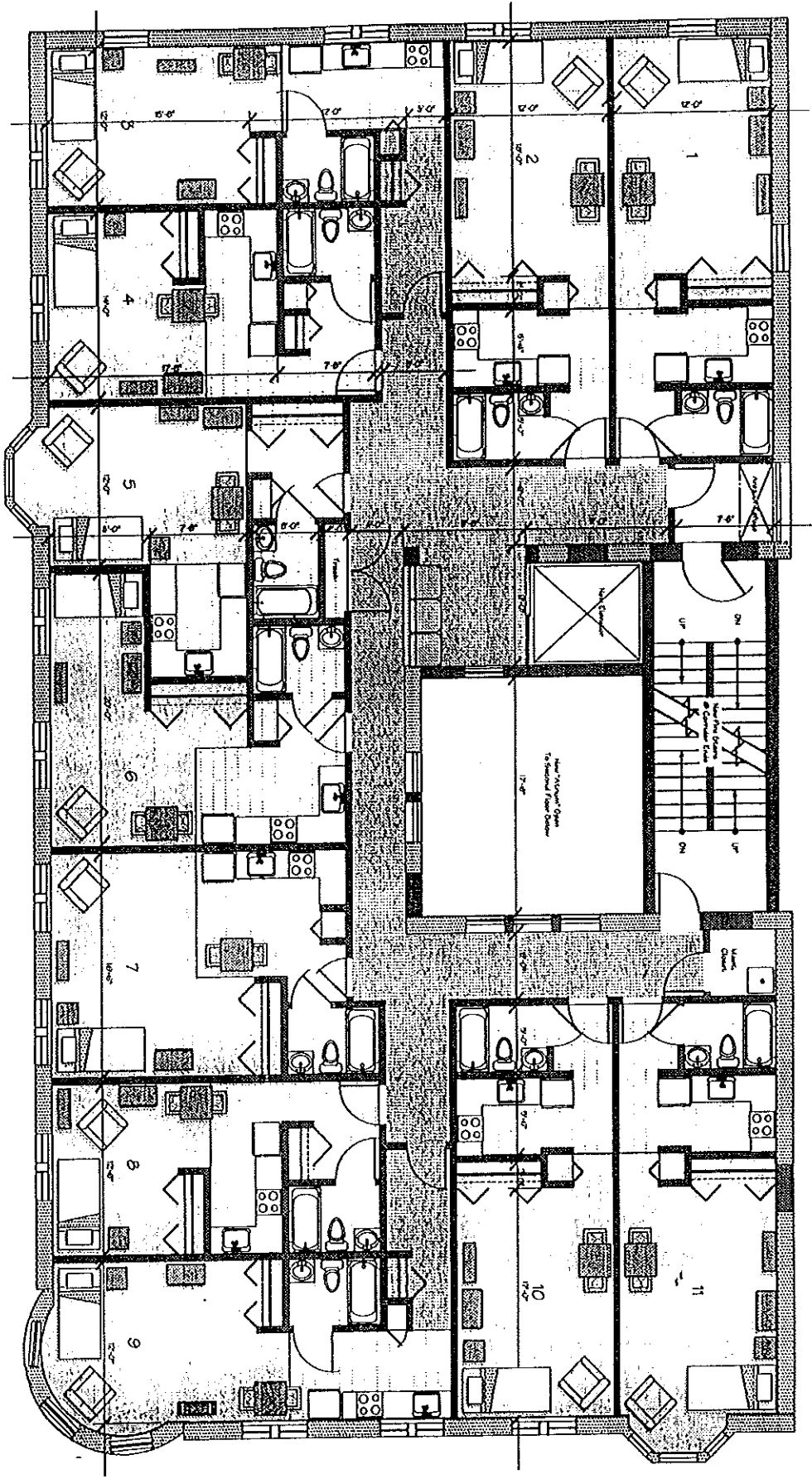
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