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Developers try again to save Price Hill's 'Alamo'

Business Courier of Cincinnati - by [Dan Monk](#) Senior Staff Reporter

For the third time in three years, developers are trying to rally support for a Price Hill fixer-upper. The 801 Elberon building, a once-stately apartment property that now stands as a symbol of neighborhood neglect, is close to winning a grant that could convert the property to low-income senior housing.

The Model Group, a Walnut Hills developer, is working on a joint venture with nonprofit Price Hill Will. They're seeking a \$4 million award from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. It would cost up to \$8 million and have up to 36 rental units, said Bobby Maly, Model Group's vice president of development.

"There are holes in the roof," said Maly. "Something needs to be done with it this year."

The building is an architecturally significant structure at a major neighborhood gateway. Activists point to the building's history. Neighborhood lore holds it once served as a short-term hideout for Chicago gangster Al Capone.

But its crumbling façade and peeling paint have inspired some to call for its demolition. Some see the NSP grant as the building's last chance at redemption.

"I call it the Alamo," said Pete Witte, president of the **Price Hill Civic Association**. "It's critical for both the psychological and financial well-being of Price Hill."

The building was among 11 projects for which the city, Hamilton County and **Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority** sought NSP funding last year, said Michael Cervay, Cincinnati's community development director.

The group sought \$60 million from the stimulus-funded program and received \$24 million. Now, three award winners are trying to decide how to divide the money. Cervay said the 801 Elberon project is "very likely" to be funded, but the amount is not determined.

Maly said he is cautiously optimistic that a funding solution will emerge. But others have tried and failed.

In 2007, a developer lobbied for subsidies to convert it to upscale condos. The Model Group sought low-income housing credits for a conversion last summer.



Courier File Photo

A grant could give breathe new life into 801 Elberon in Price Hill.

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