

# The next dance for the *Manse*

*A project to renovate the historic Manse Hotel while preserving quality affordable housing for low-income seniors in Walnut Hills, a community undergoing significant revitalization.*



A collaborative  
partnership led by:

**ERS**  
Episcopal Retirement Services

**modelgroup**  
DEVELOPMENT • CONSTRUCTION • MANAGEMENT



**OCCH**  
OHIO CAPITAL  
CORPORATION  
FOR HOUSING

## *A* Visionary in Affordable Housing

In the early 1900s, Cincinnati millionaire Jacob G. Schmidlapp was deeply concerned with our city's housing problem. He devoted himself to developing dignified affordable tenements for low-income families, particularly African Americans. Referring to his approach as "Philanthropy Plus 5%," he encouraged others to invest to "do good" while receiving a modest return on investment.

He concentrated his efforts in the community of Walnut Hills where he installed bathrooms in each apartment, ensured ample air circulation through strategically placed windows, created community rooms and encouraged civic and social gatherings.

These were not housing requirements of the times, but what Schmidlapp considered to be a *moral standard*.





## A Vision of Our Own

Nearly a century later, leaders at Episcopal Retirement Services reflected on our own moral standards. Like Jacob Schmidlapp, the leadership within ERS and its board realized that quality affordable housing for low-income seniors was woefully lacking.

To expand ERS' mission of serving older adults in a person-centered, innovative and spiritually based way, ERS' board devised an aggressive plan to grow Affordable Living by ERS.

At the heart of Affordable Living by ERS is an array of services, well-being and enrichment programs, home-like community spaces with furnishings, fitness equipment, and safety and security installations. These services and amenities empower older adults to remain living independently as long as possible, ideally until the end of their lives.

Today, over 1,800 low-income seniors reside in 29 ERS owned and/or operated communities throughout Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. In collaboration with The Model Group, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and other critical partners, ERS anticipates adding 1-2 new communities each year to attempt to keep up with demand.

We are currently in the midst of a nearly \$14M transformation of the historic Manse Hotel on Chapel St. in Walnut Hills into 60 apartments for low-income seniors.



The anticipated  
shortage in  
affordable housing

By 2030, the population of 65+ will rise from 39M to 72M

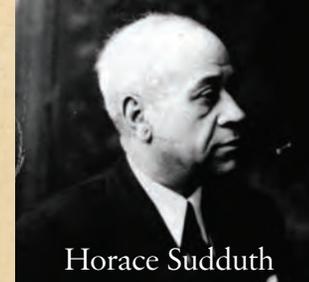
20% of Baby Boomers have < \$50k in savings

30% of Baby Boomers report having NO savings

For every affordable living unit available, there are 10 individuals in waiting

“(Segregation) made my father so angry...he wanted to help the black community. So, he decided to have this first-class hotel where both blacks and whites could stay.”

*-Daughter Horvena Sudduth Alexander in a 2014 interview.*



Horace Sudduth

## Honoring History

In 1916, upon learning that there were no hotel accommodations for African Americans, Jacob Schmidlapp built the Gordon Hotel in Walnut Hills. In 1931 African American entrepreneur Horace Sudduth followed his lead, purchasing the former Hotel Terry, essentially a boarding house. Nearly 20 years later, Sudduth purchased surrounding properties and invested \$500,000 in a massive renovation to upgrade the hotel - \$4.8M by today's economic standards! He renamed it The Manse Hotel and it opened to great fanfare on Easter Sunday 1950.

While Hotel Gordon fell victim to the Great Depression and was re-invented as low-income housing in 1935, The Manse remained the premier, if not only, hotel in Cincinnati welcoming African Americans until the 1960s.

The Manse Hotel was listed in the 4th edition of The Negro Motorist Green Book, a national guidebook advising African American travelers on where they might be welcomed as hotel guests or restaurant diners or get a haircut safely.



The new Manse Hotel boasted an ultra-modern coffee shop open round-the-clock



Full listing for Cincinnati from the 1940 Negro Motorist Green Book.



Dinners and banquets were very popular at the Manse Hotel



“The Manse was a hot place. Musicians hung out there. Music was always in the air.”

- Jazz musician Hank Ballard (center) who wrote “The Twist” in his hotel room, a song later made famous by Chubby Checker.

## If These Walls Could Talk

A vibrant city, Cincinnati attracted many famous African Americans, nearly all of whom stayed at The Manse while visiting in the ‘50s and ‘60s.

With a large formal ballroom, The Manse hosted important national conferences and events. Future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall attended the 1946 NAACP National Convention, which included a massive air show by the Tuskegee Airmen.

Many of the jazz greats of the era visited Cincinnati to record at the famed King’s Records, one of the nation’s most influential independent recording labels at the time. Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Cab Calloway and Billie Holiday were among the many iconic musicians who stayed at The Manse.

The Manse also welcomed no less than five future baseball Hall of Famers: Jackie Robinson, Hank Aaron, Willie Mays and Ray Campanella. Cincinnati Reds player Frank Robinson lived in The Manse Annex the year he was named Rookie of the Year. ERS friend Nash McCauley, who lived across the street from The Manse as a child, recalls sitting on his front steps excitedly watching the Harlem Globetrotters come and go from the hotel when they were in town.



Duke Ellington



Thurgood Marshall



James Brown



Jackie Robinson



Billie Holiday



Harlem Globetrotters

“I lived near The Manse in its heyday and I’m telling you what...it was the place to be. It was hard to imagine you could look any finer than the folks we saw headed to The Manse. It’s a shame it went into such decline.”

- Marcella Hamner, ERS resident



## The Decline of a Historical Gem

Several factors led to the decline of The Manse Hotel, beginning with Horace Sudduth’s death in 1957. When segregation formally ended in 1964, Sudduth’s dream of The Manse as an integrated hotel was never realized. African Americans began staying in downtown hotels, from which they were previously banned, and whites never patronized The Manse.

Walnut Hills suffered in the post-war period under pressures of urban renewal and highway construction. This began the community’s decline that continued for decades.

Faced with low occupancy, the hotel was converted into low-income apartments in the 1970s where the physical structure and quality of life for its residents experienced a decline paralleling the greater community.



Pre-renovation of The Manse exterior



Pre-renovation of the Ballroom



Pre-renovation of the grand staircase



## The Return To Glory

The two-square block area now encompassing The Manse project is surrounded by upstanding corporate and community citizens, all contributing to the safety and successful transformation of the entire neighborhood. These include:

- Thomson MacConnell Cadillac
- Giminetti's Bakery
- The Cincinnati Federation of Colored Women's Club circa 1904
- Walnut Court, an Affordable Living by ERS community
- Several neighboring churches and schools

Under the direction of **The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation**, the community at large is undergoing a significant and strategic revitalization. ERS' partner, The Model Group, is a key contributor to this rebirth with projects including:

- **Scholar House**- a project of Christ Church Cathedral and Cincinnati Union Bethel to support the professional and personal advancement of low-income single parents and their dependent children to end the cycle of poverty
- **La Soupe**- a non-profit dedicated to rescuing perishable food, transforming it into delicious and nutritious meals, and sharing with the food insecure
- **Caffe Vivace**- coffee house by day, jazz club by night
- **Esoteric Brewery**- Transforming the exquisite 1920's art deco style Paramount Building into an intimate taproom, hearkening back to the days of the prohibition speakeasy.



## Plans for The Manse

In 2019, the preservation, renovation and construction efforts of The Manse commenced, under the expertise of The Model Group. The project includes three separate buildings, in addition to ERS' pre-existing Walnut Court community.

The result will be the preservation of 90 low-income senior apartments in Walnut Hills. Studio and one-bedroom apartments will be available for seniors earning 30%, 50% and 60% of the area median income. The scheduled completion date is March 2021.

### The Original Manse Hotel 1004 Chapel Street

- 24 apartments
- 925 square foot community room located in the former Manse Ballroom
- 450 square foot fitness center
- On-site staff offices

### The Manse Annex 926 Chapel Street

- 18 apartments
- Community meeting room
- 16 parking spaces

### New Construction 1001 Lincoln Avenue

- 18 apartments
- Community gathering areas on each floor
- Outdoor patio space
- 9 parking spaces

### Walnut Court 1020 Chapel Street

- ERS community renovated in 2015
- 30 apartments
- Community room
- Outdoor elevated patio
- Fitness area
- On-site staff offices





“The close proximity of The Manse to our Walnut Court community will offer opportunities for economies of scale in providing services to our residents. These services are the heart and soul of what we do.”

- Kathy Ison-Lind, VP of Affordable Housing and In-home Services, ERS

## Florence's Story

Florence Carter, a longtime resident at ERS' Walnut Court community, which neighbors The Manse, shares her dramatically different experiences while living at Walnut Court before and after ERS took over ownership and management in 2015.

“When I was here (in 2013) it was terrible,” said Florence. “It was scary. The police kept showing up. People were fighting. They started putting holes in the walls. Then you would get scared to go to work because you didn't know where they were coming from. They had cigarettes and weed...I told the company that had the building that I wanted to move because I was really, really scared. They said they would look into it, which they never did. People's apartments were nasty and dirty, and people were scared to come out of their rooms. Honestly, it was really bad.”

However, when ERS became involved, Florence felt a ray of hope, “Someone said they were going to move us, and remodel the building. So they moved us all to St. Paul Village. And it was beautiful. Then when they brought us back, it was outstanding...It's comfortable, you aren't scared to open your door anymore, because when you get ready to let someone in, you can see who you are letting in. There is always something to do.”

Florence goes on to describe how her life has been impacted as a result of the revitalized community, “I call them the family, because I know a lot of them here. Anyone who would move here would love it. Because nobody bothers anybody. And if you need help with something here, they will help you.”

To see a before and after video of the transformation of Walnut Court through the eyes of Florence, visit web link <https://erslife.info/florence>



**ERS empowers residents to remain living independently by building community and providing access to support and services, such as:**

- Social Workers
- Community Managers
- On-Site Maintenance
- Wellness Programming
- Preventative Health Screenings
- On-going Activity Programming
- Chaplaincy Services
- Volunteers
- Transportation
- Fitness Centers
- Community Gathering Spaces



“We were not originally aware of the historical significance of the property. It was in such bad condition that we thought we’d simply tear it down and build anew. Once we learned the importance of The Manse to our community, we were able to get the buildings listed as part of the National Historic Register. This helped us secure critically needed tax credits to make the project work.”

- David Thompson, VP of Affordable Housing, The Model Group

## The Funding that Makes it Possible

### \$13.3M Financing of The Manse

- \$10M in 9% low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs) by Ohio Housing Finance Agency
- \$9.1M in LIHTCs equity provided by
  - \$4.5M from Fifth Third Bank Community Development Corporation (CDC), syndicated by Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH)
  - \$4.5M from OCCH multi-investor fund
- \$1.3M in federal historic tax credit (HTC) equity
  - \$675,000 from Fifth Third Bank CDC
  - \$675,000 from OCCH multi-investor fund
- \$1M grant from Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati
- \$750,000 in state HTC equity from Fifth Third Bank CDC
- \$625,000 deferred loan from the City of Cincinnati
- \$375,000 mortgage secured by City of Cincinnati HOME funds and Community Development Block Grant
- \$100,000 deferred developer fee



“It is an incredible honor to preserve these historic buildings, but due to the dilapidated conditions, it is going to be unusually costly! We anticipate the need to raise an additional \$500,000 through charitable donations. This will allow us to complete the project so that the community feels like a home to our residents.”

- Joy Rowe Blang, Executive Director of Philanthropy, ERS

## ERS Needs Your Support!

We often hear from a resident, “This is the nicest home I’ve had in my entire life!” Initially, they may be referring to the thoughtful layout of the community and quality of construction and building upkeep. The longer they live there, however, the more they realize that their *home* is not just restricted to the confines of their apartment unit. Their *home* expands to the community gathering spaces, the fitness center, and the outdoor grounds.

Quality programs and services invite our residents out of their apartments so that they become engaged members of the community. This is when neighbors become friends and friends become family. Our low-income residents don’t just survive, *they thrive*.

*Together*, we can assure that those who have given so much to our society, such as teachers, firefighters and veterans, have a safe and engaging place to call home for the rest of their lives. *Together* we can preserve this important part of history. *Together*, we can be a part of the revitalization of the great community of Walnut Hills while securing critical affordable housing that could be at risk due to gentrification.

## \$500,000+ Capital Campaign to Complete The Manse\*

\$125,000	- The Manse Ballroom restoration and furnishing
\$100,000	- Safety and security features- interior and exterior
\$ 58,000	- Initial 2 year programs and services start-up cost
\$ 50,000	- Furnishings for community gathering spaces
\$ 50,000	- Fitness Center completion and equipment
\$ 35,000	- ArtWorks mural on exterior wall
\$ 25,000	- Outdoor community space furnishings
\$ 25,000	- On-site staff office furnishings
\$ 20,000	- Historical Signage and Displays- exterior and interior
\$ 20,000	- Common area artwork

\*Naming opportunities available

# Our Mission

We enrich the lives of older adults in a person-centered, innovative and spiritually based way.

## PREMIER SENIOR LIVING

- ✦ Deupree House
- ✦ Marjorie P. Lee
- ✦ Episcopal Church Home

## AFFORDABLE SENIOR LIVING

- ✦ Affordable Living
- Ohio
- Indiana
- Kentucky

## IN-HOME AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- ✦ Deupree Meals On Wheels
- ✦ Living Well Senior Solutions
- ✦ Parish Health Ministry

# ERS Foundation

3870 Virginia Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227

Joy Blang, Executive Director of Philanthropy • 513-979-2313 • [jblang@erslife.org](mailto:jblang@erslife.org)

ERS acknowledges the following sources in researching content for this brochure

1. *We Must Not Fail!*: Horace Sudduth, *Queen City Entrepreneur* by Stephen Middleton appearing in Vol. 29 Summer 1991 No. 2 of *The Queen City Heritage*
2. *Manse Hotel and Annex: Local Developer bringing historic African America hotel back to life* by Lisa Smith. Appearing on 3/01/2019 in a *Jack and Jill of America, Inc.* publication.
3. *Walnut Hills hotel served baseball, music superstars* by Cliff Radel. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* on Feb. 21, 2014
4. *Walnut Hills Historical Society* blog posts on Jacob G. Schmidlapp
5. *Former 'Green Book' Stop to Become Senior Housing, Thanks to LIHTCs, HTC's* by Brad Stanhope in the Dec. 2019, Volume X, Issue XII of *NOVOGRADAC Journal of Tax Credits*
6. *Research included in the Manse Hotel and Manse Hotel Annex application to the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*
7. *The research of Esther H.M. Power, resident of Marjorie P. Lee, a Continuing Care Retirement Community of Episcopal Retirement Services.*