

Client:
Women's Supported
Housing & Empowerment,
Somerville, MA

Instructor:
Andrea Taaffe,
West Roxbury, MA

Grants:
Cambridge Mustard Seed
Foundation;
Farm & Garden
Association

Completion:
Spring, 1999



The Kent Street Apartments in Somerville were developed by Women's Supported Housing and Empowerment, Inc. (WSHE) and The Community Builders to provide attractive, affordable, and safe permanent homes to previously homeless women and their children. WSHE promotes a sense of community among the residents, most of

whom come from a background of trauma and abuse, as they struggle with independent living.

The apartment building is attractive, clean and safe; the landscape is utilitarian with a large parking lot, small fragmented areas of grass, and few amenities. COG designers will work with the residents and management to create, install, and help maintain spaces for gathering, playing (over 40 children live in the apartments), and food production.

Residents have expressed an interest in gaining horticultural skills. The first project event was a hands-on container gardening workshop. The bountiful planters now brighten the entryway and courtyard of the apartments. They have demonstrated that people do care, and not everything of beauty will be vandalized. Volunteers have maintained the containers through a drought-filled gardening season. The tenants involved have discovered one way to control and improve their lives by changing their environment to suit their needs.

