

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR THE PURCHASE, PRESERVATION & REUSE OF THE  
JOHN C. PLUMER HOUSE  
WEST NEWTON, PENNSYLVANIA**



**Deadline for Proposal Submissions: December 31, 2011**

Please direct all inquiries or correspondence regarding this RFP to Patrick Shattuck, Senior Estate Developer at the Mon Valley Initiative, 412-464-4000 X4013, [pshattuck@monvalleyinitiative.com](mailto:pshattuck@monvalleyinitiative.com), or Mark Harvey Smith, Real Estate Consultant to the Mon Valley Initiative, 412-585-2227, [mark@markharveysmith.com](mailto:mark@markharveysmith.com).

## **CONTENTS**

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>GOALS &amp; OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>PROPERTY TOURS</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>ZONING</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>HISTORIC PRESERVATION</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>PROPOSER EXPERIENCE &amp; ABILITY</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>TIMELINES</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>PROPOSAL CONTENT &amp; SUBMISSION GUIDELINES</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>POTENTIAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>DISCLAIMER</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>PHOTOGRAPHS</b>	<b>Page 9</b>

## OVERVIEW

The Mon Valley Initiative (MVI), a regional non-profit agency focusing on community and economic development, is requesting proposals from interested parties for the acquisition, preservation and reuse of the historic John C. Plumer House (the Plumer House) located at 131 South Water Street in the Borough of West Newton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Downtown West Newton, Inc. (DWN), a local community development corporation, with assistance from MVI is heading a revitalization effort in the downtown area where the property is located.

MVI is seeking proposals to reuse and preserve this historically significant house and property for either residential or commercial use, or a combination thereof. MVI and West Newton community officials will review and evaluate all proposals according to the following criteria detailed further herein:

- Preservation of historic elements
- Conformity of proposed reuse of the property to community goals and standards
- Proposed timing of preservation, occupancy, and use
- Financial return to the community
- Proposer abilities to meet stated goals and objectives

## BACKGROUND

The Plumer House was built by John Campbell Plumer, an important pioneer inhabitant of the area. This structure is of important local historic significance.

With extensive frontage and boat access to the Youghiogheny River, the Plumer House was built in two sections. The original wood frame two and a half story structure was finished in 1814 and features a gable roof, molded cornices, clapboard covering, and a brick chimney. The brick addition of 1846 is also two and a half stories with two large chimneys. The street entrance is recessed and paneled and topped by a three-light rectangular transom. Evidence remains on both houses of the original shutters. The interior of the original structure features two rooms on the first floor and two on the second. The three fireplaces, although primitive in detail, remain in good condition. All rooms have chair rails, doors and trim of typical colonial design. The addition has two rooms plus a hallway on the first floor, and three rooms plus a hallway on the second. Only one of three original fireplaces remains in this section. MVI replaced a deteriorating tin roof and box gutters about twenty years ago. The riverfront lot is about three fourths of an acre with 220 feet of river frontage and 110 feet deep. A small brick outbuilding is situated on the lot near the main house. A sensitive restoration, including systems replacement, was completed by the West Newton Historical Society in the late 1980s.

The Plumer House was added to the **National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)** in 1979.

Acquisition and reuse of the property is part of a larger effort by MVI and DWN to revitalize downtown West Newton. This includes the promotion of economic development and eco-tourism, especially as it relates to the presence of the Great Allegheny Passage biking and hiking trail adjacent to the Plumer House. Detailed information on a variety of commercial real estate opportunities (including the Plumer House) is available at [www.downtownwestnewtonparealestate.com](http://www.downtownwestnewtonparealestate.com).

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Consistency with the following factors will be paramount in the selection of a buyer:

1. Ongoing preservation of the house and associated outbuildings in accordance with historic standards as set forth by the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic preservation.
2. Reuse of the property that not conforms to the aesthetic and historic characteristics of the property and the neighborhood.
3. Return of the property to productive reuse as soon as reasonably possible after transfer of control to the selected proposer.
4. A purchase price that meets the minimum bid of \$75,000.
5. Sale to a selected proposer (individual or entity) that can demonstrate the experience, expertise, and financial ability to fulfill their proposed reuse and preservation within the designated time period and according to the stated goals and objectives.

## PROPERTY TOURS

Interested parties are encouraged to tour the Plumer House and its grounds prior to the development of a proposal. Arrangements to do so can be made by contacting one of the following two individuals:

Patrick Shattuck  
Senior Real Estate Developer  
Mon Valley Initiative  
412-464-4000 X4013  
[pshattuck@monvalleyinitiative.com](mailto:pshattuck@monvalleyinitiative.com)

Or

Mark Harvey Smith  
Real Estate Consultant for MVI  
412-585-2227  
[mark@markharveysmith.com](mailto:mark@markharveysmith.com)

## ZONING

The Plumer House is located in a commercial zoning district. According to West Newton's zoning ordinance, the aim of such a district is to "establish and preserve areas for those commercial facilities which are especially useful and are in close proximity to residential areas, while also minimizing the undesirable impact of such uses on the neighborhoods which they serve." Permitted uses within a commercial zoning district are:

- Advertising signs and structures
- Amusement centers (indoor only)
- Auto sales, service, storage, rental
- Bakeries or bakery goods shops
- Banks, Savings and Loans

- Barber, beauty shops
- Business colleges, trade schools
- Cabinet shop
- Commercial cleaning shops
- Social clubs
- Studios for instruction in dance, music, and voice
- Drive-in restaurants, food stands
- Floral shops
- Food store, delicatessen
- Furniture refinishing shops
- Furniture store
- Hotels
- Laundromats
- Mortuaries
- Children's nurseries
- Plant nursery
- Offices
- Parking lot, facility or garage
- Photography studio
- Prescription pharmacy, optician
- Printing and blueprinting
- Reducing salon, masseur, fitness and health salons
- Restaurant, bar
- Retail stores and services
- Service stations
- Shop for building contractor
- Sign shop
- Theaters, live or film
- Tire shops
- Apartments, other than first floor

Proposals will be evaluated based in part on adherence to zoning; but proposals for reuse of any portion of the property that is not consistent with the goals and objectives detailed herein will be eliminated from consideration. Proposals for use of the property as a single family residence (permitted as a conditional use) will be given equal consideration.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The Plumer House exhibits significant architectural and historical characteristics and features. The Review Committee will consider only those proposals that commit to a restoration of the property according to the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation as published by the National Park Service ([http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm)). The property includes an easement for historic preservation which is attached hereto.

## **PROPOSER EXPERIENCE AND ABILITY**

Careful consideration will be given to each proposer's demonstrated ability to fulfill stated objectives in a quality and timely manner and in accordance with the goals and objectives set forth herein. Proposers are encouraged to provide evidence of their respective ability to undertake a significant restoration effort. Such evidence should include prior real estate development, business, and/or restoration experience, financial capabilities, and commitment to the proposed task. Proposers are encouraged to include detailed resumes and prior project descriptions, financial statements, and other background information that supports their intended reuse of the Plumer House.

## **TIMELINES**

Proposals are due by December 31, 2011. It is the intent of the stakeholders to return the Plumer House to productive use in a timely manner. Proposals that will accomplish this goal and present a detailed timeline for restoration and reuse and proof of the proposers' ability to meet that timeline will be given highest consideration. Any proposals that lack an adequate timeline or provide vague timelines will be rejected.

## **PROPOSAL CONTENT & SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Although creative proposals detailed enough to present a clear picture of the proposer's vision for the property are encouraged, the Review Committee seeks concise and organized presentations. Proposers are encouraged to tour the property and the community prior to their submissions, and thereby to present possibilities for acquisition, restoration, and reuse that are realistic and consistent with current market conditions.

Proposals should be printed and bound for legibility and ease of handling. Five copies should be submitted to the following address and received no later than December 31, 2011:

Patrick Shattuck  
Real Estate Development Specialist  
Mon Valley Initiative, Inc.  
308-310 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120

At a minimum, proposals should include the following elements in the order listed:

- I. Executive Summary – no more than one page summarizing the intended reuse and restoration proposal.
- II. Proposer Background – resumes or other information about the proposers (individuals and/or entities), relevant preservation experience, business experience (if applicable to the proposed reuse).
- III. Proposed Preservation – a synopsis of the proposed restoration of the structure, including any plans or renderings the proposer wants to include.
- IV. Proposed reuse of the property – a synopsis of the intended use proposed for the property once restoration is complete.

- V. Business Plan Summary (if applicable) – if the proposed reuse is a business operation, please provide a one or two page summary of a business plan that indicates an understanding of the marketplace, projected sales and market penetration, and the proposer’s experience.
- VI. Financial Ability - financial documentation and other relevant proof of the proposer’s ability to complete the task at hand.
- VII. Timeline – provide a proposed timeline for acquisition, restoration, and occupancy that meets the stated goals herein.
- VIII. Terms of Proposal – indicate a proposed purchase, lease, or other options along with proposed terms and conditions, including price, term, contingencies or options.
- IX. Other Information – proposers may include other information as appendices that they deem complimentary to their proposal.

## **RESOURCES**

Proposers may find the following information and Internet links helpful. The stakeholders and the Review Committee are not responsible for the accuracy of information currently available from other organizations and sources.

Downtown West Newton Real Estate Opportunities  
[www.downtownwestnewtonparealestate.com](http://www.downtownwestnewtonparealestate.com)

Downtown West Newton, Inc.  
[www.dwni.org](http://www.dwni.org)

Westmoreland County Economic Growth Connection  
[www.egcw.org](http://www.egcw.org)

Mon Valley Initiative  
[www.monvalleyinitiative.com](http://www.monvalleyinitiative.com)

Trail Towns Program  
[www.trailtowns.org](http://www.trailtowns.org)

Allegheny Trail Alliance/Great Allegheny Passage  
[www.atatrail.org](http://www.atatrail.org)

National Park Service/National Register of Historic Places  
[www.nps.gov/history/nr/](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/)

The Progress Fund  
[www.progressfund.org](http://www.progressfund.org)

## **DISCLAIMER**

The Review Committee is offering the Plumer House property as an opportunity to qualified participants in order to meet goals and objectives stated herein, and will give serious and timely consideration to all proposals received by the stated deadline. The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received for any reasons. Information about the property set forth herein is deemed accurate but not guaranteed. The property is being offered in “as is” and “where is” condition. The Committee, the Borough of Wet Newton, MVI, DWN, and MVI will be held harmless of any claims resulting from this offering.

PHOTOGRAPHS

