

# Garfield Hill Apartments

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2301 Hartford Street S.E.  
Washington DC 20020



The 94 apartments at Garfield Hill received significant overhaul when POAH purchased the property in 2006. In addition to upgrades to the buildings and the individual apartments, a newly-constructed community building houses the management office, meeting space, a computer lab and laundry facilities.

## Project Partners

- District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

## The Preservation Challenge

Garfield Hill was a tired site when POAH first considered its purchase. Built in 1949, the property is comprised of seven buildings which combine garden-style and townhouse layouts of 1- to 4-bedroom apartments. Despite its physical needs, however, it was situated in a community undergoing major investment and concerned about the potential for gentrification and loss of affordability.

Southeast Washington, DC, the quadrant of the nation's capitol where Garfield Hill is located, has struggled for decades with chronically high rates of unemployment, low household incomes and significant crime. In recent years, however, the DC government has targeted the area for significant public investment, ranging from fire and police stations to clean up of the Anacostia River to the construction of Nationals Park, a publicly-funded major league baseball stadium less than four miles from Garfield Hill. All of these improvements have been aimed at turning the area around. And the signs are positive: property values are on the rise, the area's first supermarket opened last year, and 3,000 new units of housing are underway or approved.

Ironically, too much success too fast can actually threaten long-time residents of limited means. "Hot markets" can tempt owners of subsidized housing to 'opt out' of rent-stabilizing programs by selling their developments to the highest bidder. In DC, 15% of the subsidized housing inventory was lost to market forces between 2000 and mid-2007.

## POAH's Role

Garfield Hill could have been vulnerable to a market purchase. Located in a solidly residential neighborhood of single family homes and smaller rental developments, Garfield Hill is close to several Metro (subway) stops and bus lines, and just a few blocks from a major commuter route into downtown. However, POAH's 2006 purchase of the development guarantees that its affordable rents are protected for at least the next 20 years.

The financing package for Garfield Hill combined tax-exempt debt, syndication proceeds from the sale of Low Income Housing Tax Credits and a restructured mortgage from HUD. Over the past year, POAH has completed various upgrades to the property, including new balconies for all units, some upgrades of the heating, cooling and electrical systems, and construction of a community center which provides training and meeting space, a large common laundry area and the site management office.