

Ridgefield to renew housing properties

By Susan Tuz
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RIDGEFIELD — Work is set to begin in mid-July on renovations to moderate and affordable housing at Prospect Ridge and Ballard Green in Ridgefield.

Twelve new units will be built at Ballard Green, and 132 units will be renovated at Ballard Green and Prospect Ridge.

The project is estimated to cost some \$13 million, but each unit will be assessed as work begins, and Diana Burgos, executive director of the Housing Authority, said that should mean some savings.

"We're changing all the units over from oil to natural gas heat," Burgos said Monday. "We're doing remodeling on the interiors based on wear and tear and life expectancy of appliances. ... We are assessing each apartment on essential needs."

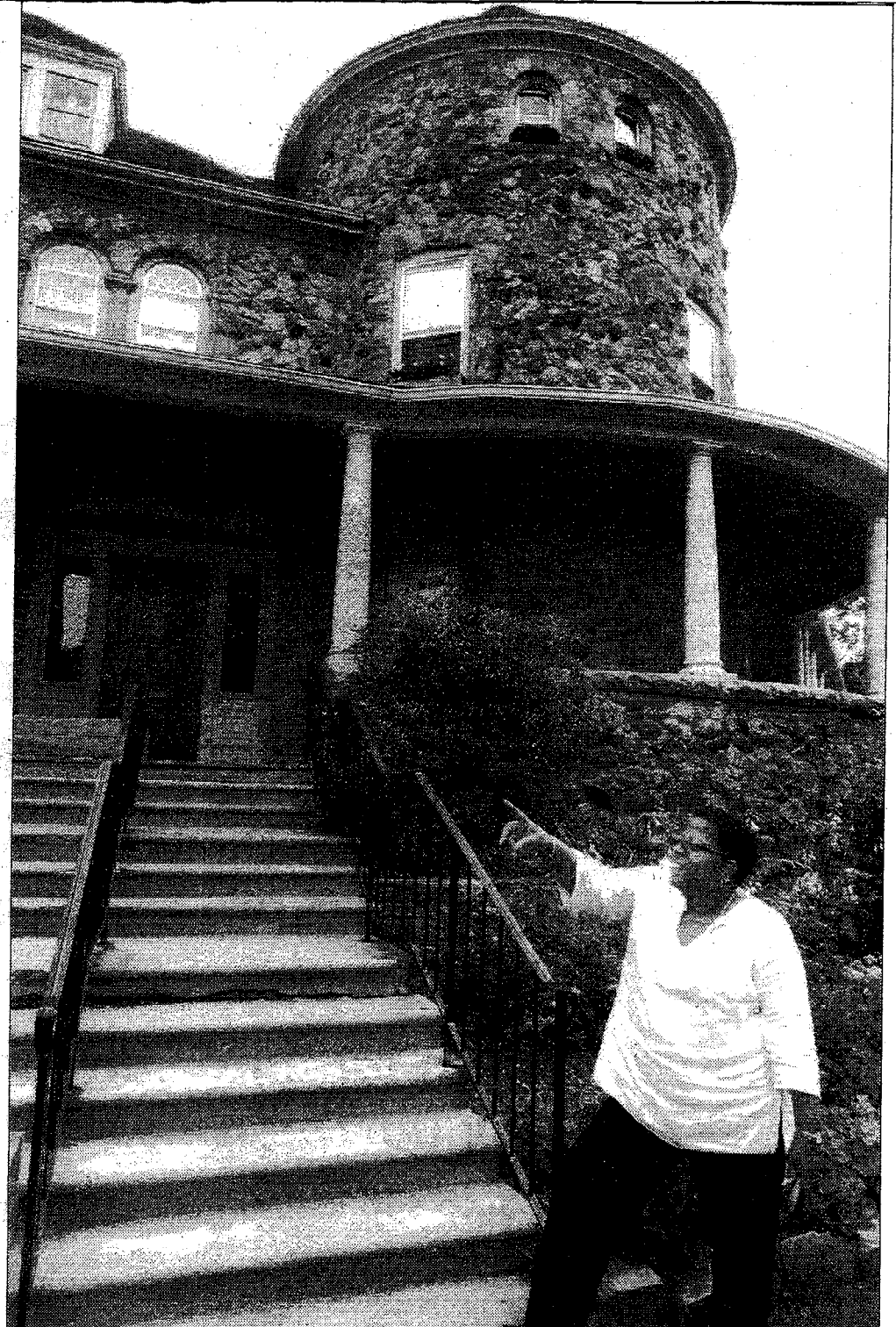
The majority of the \$13 million is from grants, said Phil Berquist, chairman of the Affordable Housing Commission. "The work will be completed before the end of 2009. The construction contract is for 14 months."

The grants include approximately \$2.5 million from the State Bond Commission, which will pay for the 12 new units at Ballard Green; some \$8 million in tax credit money from a sponsor, Boston Capital; and some \$800,000 in a federal loan from Home Bank Boston.

The Housing Authority is still looking for more investors, but Burgos said, "essential needs can be met with the money we have."

NAEK Inc., of Vernon, is the contractor for the project.

In mid-July, natural gas lines will start to be installed and exterior work will begin. Interior work will start in September.



Michael Duffy/Staff photographer
Diana Burgos, executive director of the Ridgefield Housing Authority, points out a stairway that is one of the repairs to be made at Prospect Ridge.

The old stone house at Prospect Ridge will have the most remodeling work done. It has six apartments, and most tenants will remain in them while they get new floors and kitchen cabinets. One apartment will be gutted and new walls with insulation installed. That tenant will be

moved into a vacant unit.

All residents at Prospect Ridge, which has 34 units, will remain on site, moving into two vacant apartments in sequence while their housing is redone.

At Ballard Green, which has 66 units, the tenants will also move into vacant apartments

when their apartments are worked on.

"We're gearing up for the next 20 years," Burgos said. "It's wonderful that we can do this."

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