

the crattsman.

Fall, 2019

Hot **Commodity** on Stowe Street

Decent housing in Waterbury is scarce as hen's teeth, so when Sisler Builders converted a derelict building into five apartments, they were snapped up like dollar bills thrown

about Grand Central Station. Well before completion, all five apartments were rented.

"The more people you can have living in town, the better for community economics," said Alyssa Johnson, economic development director for Revitalizing Waterbury. "A variety of housing options support a diverse, multi-generational, multi-income, multi-ethnic community. These five apartments fill a need for dense, multi-family housing. It's a wonderful option where people can remain in the community and have safe and secure housing at market rate."

The renovation was not just about providing much needed housing. It was also about preserving the character of Waterbury's downtown area and removing a lingering eyesore on Stowe Street, directly opposite Thatcher Brook Elementary School.

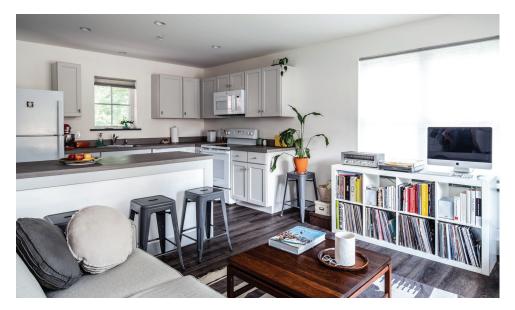
Steve Sisler, owner of Sisler Builders, grew up in an environment of historic preservation that has influenced his construction ethics. "My mother was involved in historic preservation in Ithaca, N.Y., when I was grow-



ing up there. She educated me about the importance old buildings play in the character and beauty of downtown areas. Part of that education was about architectural trends at the turn of the century.

"I've lived in Waterbury for 37 years," Sisler added. "Our sons went to Thatcher Brook from 1993 to 2000, and we would see that neglected property every day. I wanted to remove the eyesore and create something beautiful that fit the architecture typical to the turn-ofthe-century, when the original house was built, that was cohesive with the school and had the timelessness of a brick exterior."

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The Sislers purchased the building in 2010 and immediately replaced the stone and brick foundation, which Steve believes would not have survived Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. Sisler Builders got busy with other building projects and just did band-aid repairs to the building. When it became clear the roof wouldn't make it through another winter, and they had the capacity to design and build a new building, they tore the old one down.

The new building, completed in November of 2018, has three single-bedroom apartments geared towards seniors on the first floor. The second floor has two apart- easy to maintain, and has everything I need, including

ments: a two-bedroom and a three bedroom for families. All are energy efficient and use no fossil fuels directly for heating and cooling. The solar array on the roof makes it nearly net-zero, and the building exceeds



Efficiency Vermont's second-tier energy compliance and a courtyard area with dining set and grill. guidelines. Consequently, they are very comfortable to occupy and inexpensive for the occupants to operate and thoughtful about the building process. "The ease of acmaintain.

Association as their lawyer referral and membership co-downtown and the neighbors are thrilled to not have to ordinator, moved into the second-floor three-bedroom look at the old eyesore." She also points out that this was apartment with her three children ages 16, 14, and 10, a private building project that the town did not have to who live with her part time. "I can't get over how lucky make happen. "It's transforming and provides value to I am to have landed here," she said. "It's clean, modern, the community. We wish there were more like it."

Painted maple cabinets with nickel hardware, Energy Star appliances, and luxury vinyl plank floors combined with sheetrock returns on the windows, along with Vermont green slate sills provide a sleek, clean look and low maintenance and operating cost for the occupants. Brick gives the building a grounded timeless look, while siding of wider and then narrower dimensions brings down the scale and adds interest. A private back courtyard with lawn furniture and grill fosters community.

a mud room. The layout is thoughtful and it has nice light. The best part is the location. It's ideal. I'm in the village, near school and the public transit bus line. I've always lived in this village and didn't want to leave."

Abajian's daughter, Amelia, says she likes that it's new and clean and has a modern look. Her brother, Peter, likes it because it's easy to remember where he lives. They all love the size of the living space—spacious without being cavernous. There is also ample parking

Alyssa Johnson concurs that Sisler Builders was cessibility, regardless of age, is a bonus. The bottom Michelle Abajian, who works for the Vermont Bar floor apartments are ADA compliant. It's easy to walk to

One Volunteer's Values

When it comes to volunteering, you can count on Leslie Proteau to share her time, experience, and knowledge. As she says, "If I can volunteer, why not do it?"

Leslie has been Sisler Builders' administrative assistant since 2005, when she worked part time. Now she is full time, handling payroll and bill paying. She and her husband Brian Proteau have three children, two in college and one in high school. The entire family enjoys helping others and volunteering for various community programs and projects.

What motivates you to volunteer?

My mom always volunteered when I was growing up, and she still does. It's instilled in me. I feel more involved with the community and it keeps me in touch with people in the area. It gets me out the door and I see a variety of people. Volunteering makes me feel good. I enjoy helping others and doing something worthwhile.

How did you stay involved while raising a family?

Luckily I was able to stay home with my kids, while my husband worked at IBM, so I could bring them with me pretty much everywhere. I met a lot of people who were doing the same thing. Many of my friends did volunteer work, so I could hang out with them while helping others. I was with people I enjoyed and I also met new people. I loved being at home with my kids back then. We had so much fun and were busy every day and involved with the community. Now I enjoy just going to work, and sometime I get my "little kids fix" by babysitting.



Team Nantasket GoGetters at the 2019 Relay for Life. (Back row, left to right) Leslie Proteau, her sister Christine Marcella, her daughters Ashley (16) and Amber (21), her sister Patricia Marcella, and in front is her son Andrew, 18, who just began his first year in college.

Have you volunteered as a family?

We have done the Relay for Life, a fundraiser for cancer, in Essex for 20 years. I started when our oldest was a baby. The kids have done it with me since they were born. I've done it while I was pregnant, with kids in strollers, and when we could all walk together. Unfortunately the list of whom we walk for is getting longer.

How did you find the time?

Honestly, I have no idea. When my youngest was in eighth grade I was working full time and doing Odyssey of the Mind, PTO, and the ski and ride program. The past few years were busy with sports, so I did not volunteer as much. But now that two kids are in college and one in high

school, I hope to do a little more for Boosters and I'm looking forward to becoming involved with Friends of Stowe Adaptive Sports, a chapter of Disabled Sports, USA. I will still do Relay for Life and I plan to reach out and see if they need help.

What else do you do?

I like gardening. I have a veggie garden, perennials, and some annuals. I also like kayaking on Waterbury Reservoir and walking.

What is it like to often be the only female employee at Sisler Builders?

I don't really notice it or think about it. Much of the crew is in the field, so I don't see them, and everyone in the office is super nice.



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In the News

All in the Family—We now have three multi-generational families working for Sisler Builders! Shannon Kennison, a long-time finish carpenter, has his son Noah at his side. Shannon is teaching his talents and proficiencies to Noah.

Noi Jones' daughter Tanika has also joined us as a laborer and apprentice carpenter.

Luke Sisler, son of Steve and Sharon, has been with the company three years. He is a site supervisor.

We are proud to provide an environment that multiple generations want to be a part of, where they can develop their skills and learn about the trade.

It's a Girl!—On August 17, carpenter Chad Roy and his wife Megan had a baby girl, Mirabelle. It will be a while until Mirabelle can be a full-on team member.

Say "I Do"—Also on August 17, Chris Boyea, a Sisler Builders site supervisor, married Lisa Boyden.









Ask the Craftsmen.

Why use different siding materials on one building?

In a nutshell, it's all about reducing the scale of the facade and adding visual interest so the building feels more grounded and connected to the land. Adding a layer of detail above the base makes the building more visually appealing.

Typically we will use a masonry product, such as stone or brick, at the base to tie it to the ground. Masonry products anchor a building, so it doesn't feel adrift. Above that we will use more decorative siding, colors, and trim materials. In new homes as well as renovation projects, we will define the main house, then distinguish additions from the main house by employing a less-embellished look. By thoughtfully varying the siding materials we can change a plain, boring house to a warm, welcoming one.

Send your building question to Ask@SislerBuilders.com. We'll answer it in our next newsletter.