Stuart St. Apartments & Empowerment through Cooperative Management (PDF) (link to both Stuart St. Apartment property and also to Program-Empowerment through Cooperative Management.)

Over the last 20 years the African American Community in Berkeley has been rapidly declining as a result of increasing costs of housing, as well as intensifying gentrification, resulting in unprecedented levels of displacement of historic Bay Area communities of color. According to a 2017 report by the Berkeley Mayor’s Anti-Displacement Working Group, from 2000 to 2015, the African American population declined by 37% in Berkeley, while other populations increased.

This joint project between the Historic McGee Avenue Baptist Church (MABC) and the Bay Area Community Land Trust (BACLT), aims to address the dire local affordable housing needs of the Berkeley African American community by rehabilitating MABC’s eight-unit residential property into affordable housing for those under threat of displacement. Founded in 1918, MABC is an important historic and cultural institution of African American heritage in the South Berkeley community. In 2018 it celebrated 100 years of history and community service and was recognized as 2018’s “Outstanding Community Organization” during Berkeley’s Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Civic Ceremony. In the 1990s, MABC established ministries to address community concerns, including, HIV and AIDs, Domestic Violence, Prison Visitation, a Computer Center open to all in the Berkeley Community, and became the home of BOCA – Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action. Since 1997 it has continued to serve three hot meals a week to the homeless community (Berkeley has one the largest homeless populations in California).

MABC acquired the property in 1978 to provide affordable housing for its low-income members. However, as the congregation dwindled and people moved out of the area due to increasing cost of living, the building slowly became vacant and experienced blight. This project will place this historic residential property back in service for long-time Berkeley residents earning 50% - 80% of Area Median Income by using the Community Land Trust (CLT) and Cooperative Model.
The first CLT was launched in the 1960s as a vehicle for social and political change for the Southern Civil Rights Movement in Albany, Georgia, and we believe it can continue to be a successful model today for community driven development in communities of color. CLT stewardship of land ensures permanent affordability for generations to come, and together with the Cooperative Model, it creates a greater sense of dignity and empowerment of communities through self-management and collective ownership. The longer-term goal is to convert the MABC rental property into a 100% resident managed Co-op, with on-going education and technical assistance provided by BACLT.

Our project aims not only to create affordable housing but to preserve an important historic and cultural site of African American heritage and to benefit the local African American community in several ways by:

1. Preventing the displacement of residents from their long-established communities by the rising costs of housing.
2. Ensuring permanently affordable housing and a safe home for this generation and future generations.
3. Continuing critical community services provided by MABC to establish standards for healthy communities.
4. Empowering existing African American residents to generate greater leadership, sustainable self-management, and resilience in the face of limited resources.
5. Transforming the stigma of affordable housing as “welfare” into the basis for collective power and action within the housing community and beyond.

For more information about this project read the recent article in Shareable: [https://www.shareable.net/how-a-cooperative-approach-to-property-management-can-build-collective-power/](https://www.shareable.net/how-a-cooperative-approach-to-property-management-can-build-collective-power/)
Berkeleyside: **100 year old church wants to turn neglected complex into affordable housing.**