

the Lydia Street Alley Flat

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence 2010



2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name Lydia Street Alley Flat Location 904-B Lydia Street, Austin, Texas 78702

Owner Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation

Project Use(s) Residence (affordable rental housing; new construction)

Project Size 600 square feet Total Development Cost \$85,000 + in-kind donations

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) n/a

Date Initiated 2007 Percent Completed by December 1, 2010 100%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) August 2009

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name Michael Gatto Title Executive Director and Co-Founder

Organization Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC)

Address 2108 E M Franklin Ave City/State/Zip Austin, Texas 78723

Telephone (512) 220-4254 Fax (512) 220-4239

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Perspective Sheets:

Organization Name Telephone/e-mail

Public Agencies Austin Energy Green Building / Richard Morgan / 512-482-5309 / richard.morgan@austinenergy.com

City of Austin Neighborhood Housing & Community Development / Rebecca Giello / 512-974-3100 / rebecca.giello@ci.austin.tx.us

Architect/Designer The University of Texas at Austin / Steven A. Moore / 512-471-0184 / samoore@austin.utexas.edu

Developer Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation / Mark C. Rogers / 512-479-6275 / gndc@sbcglobal.net

Professional Consultant

Austin Community Design and Development Center / Michael Gatto / 512-220-4254 / michaelgatto@acddc.org

Community Group

Other

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing Magazine Announcement Previous Selection Committee member Other (please specify)
 Professional Organization Previous RBA entrant Online Notice Bruner/Loeb Forum

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Signature Michael Gatto Date 12/09/2010

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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Project Name Lydia Street Alley Flat

Address 904-B Lydia Street

City/State/ZIP Austin, Texas 78702

1. Give a brief overview of the project.

The Alley Flat Initiative (AFI) is an award-winning partnership between the University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development (UTCSD), the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC), and the Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC) that seeks to increase the development of sustainable, affordable infill housing in Austin, Texas. "Alley Flats" (commonly known as "granny flats" or "mother-in-law apartments") are detached secondary dwelling units of 850 square feet or less, built on underutilized lots in which the existing structures cover less than 30% of the lot. Accessed from Austin's extensive network of alleys, these flats can be built by homeowners on the back of their lots to house family members and/or generate rental income, helping to prevent gentrification in threatened minority neighborhoods. The long-term objective of the AFI is to create a flexible and self-perpetuating delivery system for sustainable and affordable housing that will include not only efficient housing designs constructed with sustainable technologies, but also innovative methods of financing and home ownership that equitably benefit all neighborhoods in Austin.

The Lydia Street Alley Flat, the second of two Alley Flat prototypes intended to vet the concept before the delivery system was implemented citywide, was completed in 2009. Located on Lydia Street in the Guadalupe Neighborhood on Austin's east side, Alley Flat no. 2 is a 600 square foot, one-bedroom/one-bathroom home designed by students at the University of Texas School of Architecture. A local contractor worked with University of Texas students to complete the construction. The design is fully accessible for mobility impairments and earned a five star rating out of a possible five stars from the Austin Energy Green Building Program. It is S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed-income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-oriented) housing certified by the City of Austin as meeting and exceeding energy provisions articulated in the City's 2020 Climate Protection Plan, and features rain barrels, low VOC paints, adhesives and sealants, a natural concrete stain, spray foam insulation, a reflective metal roof, high performance windows, and a durable terra cotta rain screen. The home is a true "granny flat," since it was designed to provide affordable housing for the elderly grandmother of the family living in the primary house, and is owned by the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

Although small in size, the Lydia Street Alley Flat's ability to act as a model for sustainable, affordable infill land use both in Austin and across the country is very large. The Lydia Street Alley Flat provides a beautiful and affordable housing solution that speaks to the challenges of gentrification pressures in Austin, while at the same time weaving sustainable, affordable, well-designed infill housing into Austin's existing urban fabric in a culturally sensitive manner. The Lydia Street Alley Flat respects and enhances the unique architectural and cultural character of Austin's Guadalupe neighborhood while transforming and energizing the neglected alleyway – all while providing affordable, accessible, sustainable infill housing that allows current residents to stay in their neighborhood, despite extreme gentrification pressures. The Lydia Street Alley Flat serves as a model of how to maintain and strengthen a distinctive community's strong sense of place.

The Lydia Street Alley Flat is unique not only because of its inventive design, but also because of the inclusive system of decision-making and collaboration through which the project was developed. It was designed and built as part of a collaborative development process that included a cooperative of non-profits, advocacy organizations, and the University of Texas at Austin. This unique approach to project development not only yielded a beautiful, sustainable, and affordable design, but also provided community housing development organizations with the tools to use land more creatively and to engage a more sustainable model of development. In addition, the development and construction of the Lydia Street Alley Flat engaged UT Austin students in both community-based design-build studios and research seminars, helping to inspire a new generation of architects interested in public interest design. Through their experience designing and building the Lydia Street Alley Flat, students developed the tools to leverage the practical and ethical complications of public service as a means to heighten the quality of their work by seeking innovative design solutions that positively impact larger social problems.

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The goal of the Lydia Street Alley Flat is to provide affordable and environmentally responsible infill housing, designed as an integral part of its ecological, cultural, and political context. The long-term objective of the Alley Flat Initiative is to build on the success of the Lydia Street Alley Flat to create a flexible and self-perpetuating delivery system for sustainable and affordable housing that will include not only efficient housing designs constructed with sustainable technologies, but also innovative methods of financing and home ownership that equitably benefit all neighborhoods in Austin. A sustainable housing delivery system would enable local nonprofit institutions to build a network of perpetually affordable, energy-efficient units. It would also enable homeowners throughout the city to develop modest, green flats like the Lydia Street Alley Flat to help absorb housing demand more evenly across town.

There are, of course, many challenges to achieving affordable and sustainable infill housing in Austin. For many residents in gentrifying neighborhoods, green design is seen as an elitist concept that only a select group can afford. In addition, many Austin residents do not perceive urban density as desirable, assuming that increased density means tall towers instead of smaller-scale residential neighborhoods. Increasing density without increasing building heights is one of the primary barriers to public acceptance of density and sustainable land use. Yet without increased density and urban housing options, sprawl and traffic congestion will increase, resulting in a larger regional carbon footprint.

The design of the Lydia Street Alley Flat also required negotiation between sustainable design goals, budget constraints, the architectural objectives of the designers, and the existing community's desire for infill housing that is in keeping with the traditional bungalows that make up the majority of the neighborhood's building stock. Although the collaborative development process yielded a successful design, it required ongoing negotiation and partnership building in order to ensure that all stakeholders' goals were met by the final design.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project?

The City of Austin's urban environment is changing at a rapid pace, and the availability and accessibility of affordable housing options for Austin residents is an ongoing challenge. Housing costs in Austin have risen by 90% in the past 10 years, three times faster than the median family income. Working families have to move further away from the city core, where jobs and city services are located. This inequitable development pattern not only threatens the culture and diversity of the City, but also exacerbates the environmental problems of suburban sprawl. The Lydia Street Alley Flat illustrates how the abandoned alleyways of Austin provide an opportunity to increase the density of gentrifying urban neighborhoods through affordable infill housing development – transforming urban problems into a creative solution.

Alley Flats, including the Lydia Street Alley Flat, take advantage of development tools already used by the City of Austin to "fill in" vacant and underutilized lots to encourage growth inside the city. The Lydia Street Alley Flat is not only sustainable and affordable, thoughtfully designed and beautiful, but it also empowers a lower income resident to stay in her community. It leads by example – a GIS analysis by UT graduate students documents that there are roughly 42,000 lots in Austin that could support Alley Flats – and at this scale, the AFI could significantly reduce suburban sprawl and provide rental income opportunities for lower income families that could help to offset the cost of rising property taxes. A recent housing market study estimated that Austin has an affordable housing gap of over 35,000 units, and although the AFI does not claim to be the only solution needed to fill this gap, this type of housing could certainly contribute to the housing needed to serve Austin's working families.

Overall, the AFI contributes to sustainable development in the City of Austin by: supporting a dynamic economy by maintaining population, jobs, and businesses within the city; providing convenient access to basic services and jobs; reducing the cost of transportation; providing opportunities that subsidize property tax increases; helping to provide a more diverse housing supply and allowing more area residents to live in the central city at an affordable price in a well-designed home; protecting the environment by reducing air pollution produced from commuter traffic; and preventing degradation of undeveloped areas and preserving open space. The AFI has already reached over 1100 individuals through public presentations, focus groups, and classes at UT Austin, and over 100 community members attended a housewarming at the Lydia Street Alley Flat. And now that the community has successfully vetted the second prototype, ten more alley flats are already in development.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The Lydia Street Alley Flat serves as a prototype alley flat, showcasing both the innovative design and environmental sustainability features of the alley flat homes. The AFI and its partner organizations were collaboratively responsible for the design and development process of the Lydia Street Alley Flat. In 2007, undergraduate and graduate architecture students participated in a community-based Alley Flat design studio, which resulted in the design for the Alley Flat. In addition to cost and sustainability, students were encouraged to design the Lydia Street Alley Flat in a manner that respects the historic neighborhood character. Reviews were held in the community to get the feedback of potential clientele, who often have very different aesthetic standards than the architecture faculty. It is the negotiation of all of these values and constraints that challenged the students to find new, creative solutions in the design of the Lydia Street Alley Flat. The design studio was followed by a summer build, in which students helped a local builder to complete construction of the Lydia Street Alley Flat. The Alley Flat Coordinator served as supervisor and on-site architect for the build.

Building on the success of the first two alley flats, the AFI is currently working to develop consensus around the creation of a city policy or program that would make green, affordable, infill housing easier to build in Austin. Recognizing that it is critical to engage the community of homeowners, policymakers, architects, and various affiliated non-profits and businesses as deeply and as broadly as possible, the goal is strong, grassroots support and widespread buy-in for affordable, sustainable, community-enhancing development in Austin. To this end, in addition to publications and presentations, the AFI mounted an exhibition at Austin City Hall 26 March through 9 April 2010 that provided city staff, community stakeholders and the Comprehensive Plan Citizens Advisory Taskforce with data and rationale to modify the existing S.M.A.R.T. Housing ordinance to better serve the combined needs of city policy regarding workforce housing and the 2020 Climate Protection Plan. The two-week visual exhibit explored Austin's current affordable housing shortfall and showcased Alley Flat designs as a potential solution. The Opening Celebration welcomed over 150 community members, city staffers, affordable housing advocates, and University students and faculty to join in the dialog about Austin's affordable housing shortage, creative infill strategies, and the AFI's accomplishments.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

Lydia Street Alley Flat was built for \$85,000, or \$133 per square foot, not including donations of \$5,000. It is offered for rent below 30% of the Austin Median Family Income level, and was primarily funded by Rental Housing Development Assistance funds from the City of Austin, as well as private donations. It represents a new design solution that creates green, affordable housing in a city with rising property taxes and the related pressures of gentrification.

All Alley Flats constructed under the AFI must be rented at 80% or below of Austin area median family income, and the Lydia Street Alley Flat is no exception. Because of its affordability requirements, this alley flat helps to increase the amount of high quality, affordable housing in Central Austin. Financing for the Lydia Street Alley Flat was provided by a 2006 City of Austin Bond Issue to stimulate S.M.A.R.T. housing. The AFI also paves the way for for-profit developers interested in developing affordable infill housing in Austin, and the Lydia Street Alley Flat provides a prototype model for interested developers.

All Alley Flats are designed to be affordable to community members making 80% or less than the median family income. Alley Flats are also designed to use 40% less energy and 20% less water than a minimally code compliant home.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The AFI has been designed to be replicable in other communities, and the Lydia Street Alley Flat provides a visible model for urban sustainability with affordable, livable, high-quality housing. Although every community is different, a major goal of the project is to produce prototype Alley Flats, as well as a planning and delivery process, that would be applicable in other communities. Although Santa Cruz developed the first public policy regarding alley flat development years ago, the Austin AFI has already become the leader in green, affordable housing infill development because of this prolific collaborative model. Public Architecture, a national design non-profit based in San Francisco, has made building affordable, sustainable infill housing one of their main priorities and is using our Initiative as their national model. At the Alley Flat Exhibition held at Austin's City Hall this March, John Peterson, the Founder and President of Public Architecture, spoke about the national importance of the AFI and its value as a model from which other cities should draw inspiration.

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD AWARD USE



AWARD USE

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Please separate this page from the rest of the application. Award Use should be submitted in a sealed envelope along with the application materials. It will not be used in judging entries or be seen by members of the Selection Committee.

Please describe how *Award* monies will be used to benefit the project. (The *Award* check will be made out to the Applicant unless otherwise specified.)

** This statement should be signed by the applicant. Photocopies or facsimile copies of the statement with original signature is acceptable. Award Use statement should be submitted in a sealed envelope along with the application materials.

Name and Title

Date

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



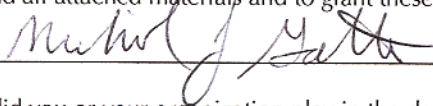
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project providing services other than physical design or planning (e.g., legal services).

Name	Michael Gatto	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Austin Community Design and Development Center	Telephone	(512) 220-4254
Address	2108 EM Franklin Avenue	City/State/ZIP	Austin, TX 78723
Fax	(512) 220-4239	E-mail	michael.gatto@acddc.org

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Signature  Date 12/8/10

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit whose mission is to improve the quality of life for all by providing sustainable design, planning, and development services to low and moderate income individuals, families, and neighborhoods. ACDDC provides project management for each Alley Flat project and the Alley Flat Delivery System. ACDDC facilitates the design and development process, including programming, development assistance, cost control / budget monitoring, permitting, site feasibility studies, recruiting pro-bono designers, maintain owner/designer/project manager relationships, writing the SMART housing application, and assisting owners in bidding/selecting a licensed general contractor.

Upon completion of the initial Lydia Street Alley Flat design by University of Texas School of Architecture students, ACDDC drove the value engineering, re-design, construction, and fundraising process, in addition to its typical role as project manager. When working with student designs, ACDDC's role is expanded to assist in student teaching/learning and provide consistency across semesters. After the semester studio concluded, ACDDC took the student design through a several rounds of cost-estimating and value engineering, a worthwhile exercise that provided valuable data for future AFI projects. In collaboration with a local contractor, ACDDC led a design/build course with UT students to complete exterior elements, including exterior cladding, entry portico, fencing, and landscape elements.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

The project's development and completion has had positive impact on the local neighborhood, increased awareness for affordable housing, and contributed to the positive momentum of the Alley Flat Initiative.

Locally, the Lydia Street Flat contributes to a unique East Austin neighborhood with bright colors, turn-of-the-century homes, and rich community. The current resident, an elderly grandmother, has lived in the neighborhood for decades and is a long-term renter of GNDC properties. The fully-accessible unit has enabled her to maintain her independence and quality of life near other family members. As her son described, "It's just a matter of still being part of the family, of the neighborhood family. She doesn't feel isolated from the rest of the community. She's near her grandchildren, she's connected to the neighborhood." The housewarming celebration in August 2009, upon completion of the project, was representative of these deep community roots and neighborhood pride. With over 100 attendees, U.S. Congressman Lloyd Doggett, GNDC board members and staff, ACDDC staff, and neighbors celebrated with the new resident.

The Lydia Street Alley Flat has increased awareness for infill housing, as one of many options to solve Austin's affordable housing crisis. Currently, Austin lacks over 36,000 units for individuals making less than \$20,000 per year. As a growing city, Austin must incorporate all types of housing in all parts of town for all types of people to maintain our diversity, fight sprawl, and increase density in urban neighborhoods. As momentum grows for the Initiative, this project serves as a wonderful success story and example for other non-profit and for-profit developers.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

The development process and delivery system of Alley Flats is truly collaborative and exemplary of positive public/private partnerships. Each of the three primary collaborators (GNDC, ACDDC, and UTCSD) brings a unique skill set and expertise to the project creating a dynamic effort for sustainable affordable housing and neighborhoods. We believe this collaborative process is instructive to other community development agencies and is a model worthy of their emulation. This collaborative model also has great potential for replication in other cities and other community-based design projects.

The Lydia Street Alley Flat is proof that the collaborative model works, specifically for secondary apartments, which are also known as accessory dwelling units. Nationally, the project has been recognized as a model for secondary apartment development. ACDDC has provided project precedent and institutional knowledge to other non-profit developers and researchers looking to develop similar models and affordable housing. As we share the lessons we've learned through this process, we are paving the way for the development of green affordable infill housing nationwide.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects include:

- The project has provided an affordable, healthy, safe, fully accessible home for a low-income elderly Austinite.
- The development has brought new awareness to Austin regarding infill housing and its potential in urban neighborhoods, particularly through the ribbon cutting ceremony which attracted many local residents.
- The development effort was a true collaboration, since it involved students and faculty from the University of Texas School of Architecture, the executive director and board members of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation, and the staff of the Austin Community Design and Development Center.
- Economic and environmental sustainability were top priorities in the development process, such that the project earned five out of a possible five stars on the Austin Energy Green Building Program rating tool.
- The development and construction process was a great learning experience and provided useful data.

The least successful aspects include:

- The air conditioning system was not the most efficient model due to a lack of funds.
- Some neighborhood residents have reacted negatively to the aesthetic appearance, as the form and roof pitch do not match the common bungalow.

2011
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PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a staff representative of a public agency directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name **Rebecca Giello** Title **Acting Assistant Director**
Organization **City of Austin Neighborhood Housing & Comm. Devel.** Telephone (**512**) **974-3100**
Address **1000 E. 11th St.** City/State/ZIP **Austin, TX 78702**
Fax () E-mail **rebecca.giello@ci.austin.tx.us**

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Signature  Date **12/8/10**

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

The mission of the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development office is to provide housing, community development, and small business development services to benefit eligible residents providing access to livable neighborhoods and increase their opportunities for self-sufficiency. To implement this mission, the agency oversees a number of housing and economic development programs, including affordable housing funding and oversight through the Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). In 2009, AHFC allocated \$60,000 of General Obligation Bond funding to construct the Lydia Street Alley Flat, owned by the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC). GNDC committed to rent the unit for 99 years at an affordable rate for those at 50% median family income and below. As an AHFC-funded project, GNDC was also required to participate in the City's S.M.A.R.T. housing program. The S.M.A.R.T. (Safe, Mixed-income, Accessible, Reasonably-priced, Transit-oriented) housing developer incentive program is a nationally recognized program designed to stimulate the production of affordable housing for low and moderate income residents of Austin. The program provides technical assistance during the design, development, and permitting process. To meet SMART housing program requirements, the Lydia Street Alley Flat was designed to be fully accessible for mobility impairments and satisfy a minimum of one star on the Austin Energy Green Building Program checklist.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

This project and the Alley Flat Initiative at large propose a new sustainable, green affordable housing alternative for Austin. In contrast to green field development, the Alley Flat Initiative advocates for infill housing through secondary apartments as one of many solutions to Austin's affordable housing crisis.

With a vision for hundreds of Alley Flats with Austin's urban core, the Initiative intends to improve integration of sustainable design practices at multiple scales. The City's S.M.A.R.T. housing program assists in the development of sustainable housing options and advocates for connected, transit oriented, high quality designs.

In financially supporting this project's construction, our contribution per unit was key to the overall construction budget. With a total project budget of \$85,000, our \$60,000 of funding supports single-family development. GNDC and other supporters leveraged an additional \$25,000 to complete construction.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

The project's most direct impact is providing a safe, affordable home for a low-income Austinite. The unit has been well-received by the current resident, an wheelchair-bound, elderly grandmother. Due to the City's long-term affordability requirements, the unit is guaranteed to be rented to an income eligible household for a minimum period of 99 years. In addition, utility payments are minimized for the household due to green building and other energy efficient features in the unit.

At the community level, the project's success has impacted local residents and the general public's view of affordable housing in the urban core. At the neighborhood scale, the project exemplifies well-designed affordable housing that maintains neighborhood character and increases density. The project is an alternative to large scale, multi-family housing, often associated with negative connotations connected to affordable housing and difficult to introduce in existing single family neighborhoods. The unit is well-integrated and complements the surrounding, historic neighborhood.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The Lydia Street Alley Flat is our first completed project with the Alley Flat Initiative through the project owner, Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation. The mission and approach of AFI and its partnerships with Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) is a unique delivery system for affordable secondary apartments. AFI provides the design and project management services, including coordination with SMART housing. AHFC assists AFI and GNDC through SMART housing certification and financial resources for construction. GNDC provides the land and property management to maintain long term affordability.

We have included the Lydia Street Alley Flat on our "Return on Investment" website, documenting the successful use of public funding in affordable housing projects. As a key tool to create and retain affordability in Austin, the project is exemplary of anti-sprawl development and raises the bar for sustainable infill development and green design practices in affordable housing.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

Components that led to the project's success include: fiscally responsible use of public funding, high-quality construction by a local East Austin contractor, completion contributes to momentum of the Initiative, achieved five stars on the Austin Energy Green Building Program, and successful example of infill housing.

A challenge facing the project is the ability to replicate the project on a larger scale and especially in higher-income and higher-opportunity neighborhoods. In addition, the possibility of unforeseen costs related to infrastructure improvements when the alley flat is created on the secondary infill lot.

2011
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PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a staff representative of a public agency directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

2011
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DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE



DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project?

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ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services.

Name	Title
Organization	Telephone ()
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1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

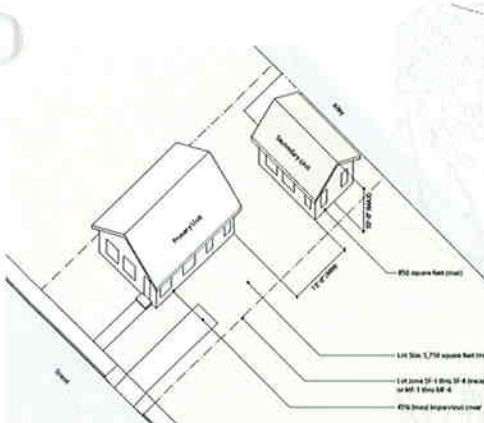
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context.

Austin's Infill Housing Potential

By neighborhood planning area



Alley Flats are detached secondary dwelling units of 850 square feet or less built on underutilized lots



The Lydia Street Alley Flat, Austin, Texas



LEGEND

- LOT WITH INFILL HOUSING UNIT POTENTIAL
- LOT WITH ALLEY FLAT POTENTIAL*
- ALLEY
- NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING AREA
- INFILL HOUSING TOOL ADOPTION (BY NPA / SUBDISTRICT)
- NO
- YES
- MAJOR ROAD
- MINOR ROAD
- STREET
- LADY BIRD LAKE

* ALL LOTS WITH ALLEY FLAT POTENTIAL SHOWN MAP ARE ZONED SF-3

Map By: Elizabeth Walsh

GIS analysis by UT Austin graduate students shows roughly 42,000 lots in Austin that could support Alley Flats.

Alley Flats for Families



Image: Barbara Wilson

The Lydia Street Alley Flat was designed by students at The University of Texas at Austin. It was awarded 5 stars in Austin Energy's Green Building program. The Lydia Street Alley Flat is rented at 30% MFI and is a true granny-flat, designed and built for Mrs. Rentaria, the elderly grandmother of the family in the front house. While all Alley Flats are built to be visitable, to meet Mrs. Rentaria's needs her Alley Flat is fully handicapped accessible.

Congressman Doggett, many Alley Flat partners, and four generations of the Renteria family were on hand to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the Lydia Street Alley Flat with Mrs. Rentaria. Her son, Mario Renteria, says that for Mrs. Rentaria:

*"the Alley Flat means comfort ... It's just a matter of **still being part of the family**, of the neighborhood family ... She's near her grandchildren, she's **connected to the neighborhood.**"*

Image 1: Mrs. Rentaria, family members, Alley Flat partners, and Congressman Doggett at the Lydia Street Alley Flat Ribbon cutting.



Image: Michael Gatto

Image 2: University of Texas at Austin summer design-build studio students in front of the Lydia Street Alley Flat.



Image: Sam Gelfand

Image 3: The Lydia Street Alley Flat after completion.

Image 4: University of Texas at Austin students install a fence at the Lydia Street Alley Flat.



Image: Barbara Wilson

Urban Placemaking in Austin's Alleyways



Image: Brad Deal

Existing Condition: Central East Austin Alley overlooking development to the west.



Image: University of Texas at Austin Alley Flat Studio

Student Conceptual Rendering: Alley network incorporates affordable and sustainable housing, urban agriculture, composting, stormwater management, and community gathering spaces



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GNDC - Lydia Street Alley Flat



Development: [GNDC - Lydia Street Alley Flat](#)

Award Recipient: [Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation](#)

Development Profile: Rental housing; new construction. Investing in the Alley Flat Initiative is a key tool to create and retain affordability in Austin. This newly-constructed, single-family rental unit in Central East Austin offers green, sustainable living to very low income individuals.

Total Housing Units: 1

Investment Impact: 1 affordable unit at 99 years

Affordability: 50% median family income or less

Location: [904 Lydia St., Austin, TX 78702](#)

Source of Funding: General Obligation Bonds

Amount Awarded: \$60,000

Project Status: Construction complete



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NEW URBAN NEWS

COVERING DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN-SCALE NEIGHBORHOODS

VOLUME 15 • NUMBER 1

JANUARY • FEBRUARY 2010

Abu Dhabi: new urban showcase in the Middle East?

Guided by Vancouver's Larry Beasley, the oil-rich emirate is using North America's top urbanists to shape development.

PHILIP LANGDON

In a still-shaky world economy, one place stands out as an enthusiastic employer of new urbanists and a potential model of how to develop cities. That place is Abu Dhabi, the wealthy emirate that has recently been in the news for bailing out its profligate neighbor, Dubai.

When overextended real estate development in Dubai collapsed late last year, it was Abu Dhabi that came to the rescue with \$10 billion. The largest and most petroleum-rich of the seven members of the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi has a reputation for prudent government by its royal family. In the past several years, while Dubai was erecting flamboyant towers and building islands arranged like palm trees, Abu Dhabi was searching for a course that would work better in the longer run.

In 2006, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's desire for a more stable and sustainable pattern of development led him to recruit Larry Beasley, longtime co-director of planning for Vancouver, British Columbia, to serve as "special adviser" — in effect, chief planner for the nearly 1-million-population municipality of Abu Dhabi and the 1.6-million-population emirate of the same name.

The sheikh — educated at Sandhurst in England, he is the emirate's crown prince — sought out Beasley because he had heard about the accomplishments of Vancouver, including its success in managing development. Since 1986 the residential population of Vancouver's downtown peninsula has more than doubled, to roughly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Food stands enliven the urban fabric in Portland. See story on page 4.



PHOTO BY PHILIP LANGDON

'New Economy Home' debuts

In two new urban developments under construction by LeylandAlliance — Warwick Grove in Warwick, New York, and Hammond's Ferry in North Augusta, South Carolina — designer Marianne Cusato is introducing a house tailored to today's insecure economic conditions.

Dubbed the New Economy Home, Cusato's design also will be featured in a virtual house tour at the 2010 International Builders' Show, which opens Jan. 19 in Las Vegas. The crux of Cusato's idea is that many homebuyers don't have the money or patience these days for excess square footage and overly expensive features. They want modern things such as charging stations for laptops and iPhones, but they can do without two-story foyers and other extravagances.

Flexibility is crucial, says the Miami-based Cusato, who earlier was instrumental in designing the 308 sq. ft. Katrina Cottage. The first New

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

INSIDE

New urban decade, PAGE 2

Village center thrives, PAGE 3

Food vendors enliven urban edges, PAGES 4-5

Lessons on street design from Abu Dhabi, PAGES 9-11

First TND for Yuma, PAGES 11-12

Canadian urbanists organize, PAGE 12

The Smart Growth Manual and other book reviews, PAGES 12-15

Departments, PAGES 15-17, 20

Congress for the New Urbanism Update, PAGES 18-19

NEW URBAN UPDATE

in a historic district." Architecture for the project will be supplied by Maurice Walters Architect and Torti Gallas.

■ McCormack Baron Salazar, a St. Louis-based developer with a national

reputation for urban infill, is partnering with Metro, which operates transit service in the St. Louis area, on a **transit oriented development (TOD)**. The developer wants to build 147 condominiums or apartments near the Forest Park DeBaliviere MetroLink light rail station, according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Metro and McCormack Baron have applied for a \$19 million Tiger grant — a \$1.5 billion program that was part of the 2009 stimulus package — to help build the TOD. The project could also benefit from Metro's application for \$60 million in Tiger funding for a trolley line and greenway, which would connect to MetroLink at the Forest Park DeBaliviere station, says Cady Scott, project manager for McCormack Baron.

There is heavy competition for Tiger grants — \$58 billion in applications were received for the only flexible, multi-modal funding in the stimulus. Winners will be announced in February. Scott notes that the TOD project will move forward even if no grants are awarded — but probably would be phased in at a slower pace in that case.

■ Bristol Downtown Development Corp. of Bristol, Connecticut, has selected **Renaissance Downtowns** of Plainview, New York, to revitalize the site of a former shopping mall. The

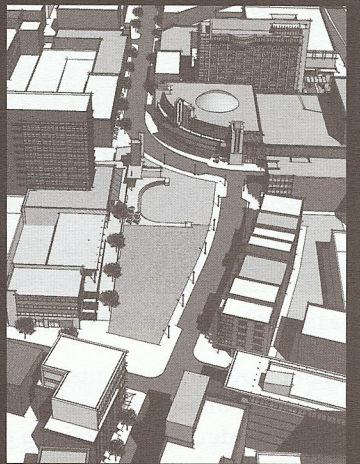
selection was scheduled to be voted on by city council in January, according to a report in the *Bristol Press*. Renaissance Downtowns is targeting 22 cities, mostly in New England, to revitalize their downtowns and redevelop sites using principles of New Urbanism.

■ **The Alley Flat Initiative**, which encourages the development of small, affordable dwellings along under-used alleys in Austin, Texas, has celebrated the construction of its second house — a 600 sq. ft. unit featuring a "rain screen" clad in terra cotta tiles. Owned by Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corp. and built by Saldana Homes with help from University of Texas students, the one-story house is designed to be about 40 percent more energy-efficient per square foot than a conventionally built house.

The pace of the Initiative (see Oct. 2008 *New Urban News*) is picking up. Four more houses, each of which will sit at the rear of a lot that contains a principal residence, are going out for bidding in January, with construction expected to begin in March. The four properties getting those flats are owned by the Guadalupe organization. Another three houses, one of them a duplex, will soon follow. One of those is a project of a new community development organization, while the others are being undertaken

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2) **Architectural Design Studio and Theory**, to teach design studio with emphasis on classical and traditional architecture and urban design.

These positions require teaching and developing course work at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, a strong commitment to scholarly research

and/or practice, as well as participation in School and University committees and service activities. A terminal degree or its equivalent in architecture or landscape architecture is required. College-level teaching experience preferred, as is state registration/licensing and NCARB certification or their equivalent. Preference will be given to candidates who desire to work collaboratively in developing teaching pedagogy and fulfilling the School's mission to teach classical and traditional architecture and urban design and adapting them to contemporary life in the belief that traditional architecture and urbanism are a sustainable culture of building and living.

Notre Dame is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from women and minorities. Notre Dame welcomes candidates committed to the values of the University's Catholic character. To apply, interested candidates should send cover letter, curriculum vitae, samples of work either publications or portfolio, and names and addresses of three references. Applications should be received by February 1st and will be reviewed until the positions are filled. Send to: Search Committee, School of Architecture, 110 Bond Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556

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NEW URBAN UPDATE

by private owners.

■ The City of **Temple Terrace**, Florida, approved a 14,000 sq. ft. performing arts center with space for studios and classrooms as part of the city's downtown development, reports the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*. The suburban municipality near Tampa has never had a mixed use, walkable center, but Torti Gallas and Partners designed one in 2004 — partly on former shopping center land.

Vlass Temple Terrace LLC, which is building the mixed use downtown development, will pay for most of the \$2.48 million arts center, notes the *Business Journal*. "Temple Terrace city officials will kick in \$540,000 to construct three studios, and also will be responsible for purchasing furniture, fixtures and equipment at an estimated cost of \$100,000," says the report.

"Other aspects of the conceptual plan reviewed by the city council include the relocation of the Temple Terrace Public Library adjacent to the Center for the Arts. The Temple Terrace Police Department would then move into the current library building on Bullard Parkway, leaving its current location on the third floor of city hall."

■ **Washington, DC**, is considering eliminating its minimum parking requirements for retail establishments, offices, and apartments near Metro stations, according to a report in the *Washington Post*. The city has discovered that parking

requirements based on typical retail formulas lead to excess parking in walkable, mixed use areas served by transit.

"The concept is that in a city like ours, with so much transit and so many transportation choices, demand for parking is on a glide-path downward," Harriet Tregoning, director of the District's Office of Planning, told the *Post*. "It's become more the fashion not to get in your car."

A good example is the bustling redevelopment that has occurred around the Columbia Heights Metro station. The city built a large garage to serve an urban mall and lure a Target store to a part of the city that was economically depressed for decades. Despite cheap rates, the lot sits mostly empty.

Across the street from the mall, The Highlands residential building has been unable to lease a third of its parking spaces, according to architect Brian O'Looney of Torti Gallas and Partners.

■ The Charity Commission in the United Kingdom has rejected a complaint that the **Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment** improperly intervenes in planning processes and that Prince Charles exerts too much influence over the foundation.

Republic, an anti-monarchy group, had accused the foundation of overstepping its legal limits as a registered charity by trying to influence a number of planning decisions in Britain.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

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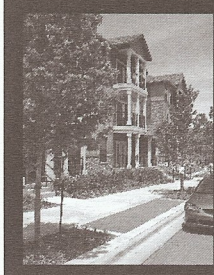
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Collaboration Between School of Architecture and City of Austin Addresses Sustainability, Affordable Housing and Urban Sprawl

March 22, 2010

AUSTIN, Texas — **The Alley Flat Initiative**, a building program that has introduced green, affordable housing to East Austin, has created new model for urban development, according to the **Center for Sustainable Development** at The University of Texas at Austin.

Alley flats are small, detached secondary residential units, often accessed from Austin's extensive network of underused alleys. They are carefully designed to use 40 percent less energy and 20 percent less water, minimizing the ecological footprint of the building.

Two flats that received the highest rating from the Austin Energy Green Building Program are being rented to low-income households in East Austin. Ten more of these green, affordable units are in some stage of design or development.

The initiative includes not only efficient housing designs constructed with sustainable technologies, but also innovative methods of financing and home ownership that can benefit all Austin neighborhoods, and ideally, can be used as prototypes for any city in the United States grappling with urban sprawl.

The Alley Flat Initiative, conceived in 2005 as a challenge for architecture students to design sustainable, affordable housing in East Austin, grew into an award-winning collaboration among the Center for Sustainable Development, the **Austin Community Design and Development Center** and the **Guadalupe Development Corporation**.

The initiative simultaneously addresses issues of sustainability, high cost of living and urban sprawl in central Austin neighborhoods.

The Sierra Club recently identified Austin as one of the most "sprawl-threatened" cities in the country, meaning it is crucial for future land use patterns to find ways to increase density without losing the character of the neighborhoods or doing further harm to the environment.

"In the last 10 years, housing prices have increased nearly 85 percent while the median family income increased only 25 percent," said Barbara Brown Wilson, assistant director of the Center for Sustainable Development. "As a result, families in Austin are finding it increasingly difficult to afford to live within the city limits and are moving farther out, threatening Austin's diversity and character.

"In addition, the recession has also drastically increased the percentage of multigenerational homes, making alley flats ideal models of housing for families who find themselves coping with job loss and foreclosures."

In 2008, the Alley Flat Initiative received an award for Excellence in Green Building Pedagogy from the United States Green Building Council. The initiative received the Envision Central Texas Community Stewardship Award for Redevelopment in May 2009.

Editor's Note: The Alley Flat Initiative exhibition will be unveiled from 6-8 p.m. on March 26 at Austin's City Hall. The exhibit runs from March 26 to April 9.

For more information, contact: Amy Crossette, School of Architecture, School of Information, 512-573-1078.

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ALLEY FLATS AND URBAN GROWTH

Austin, TX

With the "McMansion" ordinance possibly expanding south, some Austinites are exploring other ways to accommodate rapid urban growth.

Joan Owens is the Secretary of the Southwood Neighborhood Association. She wants the city to enforce the McMansion ordinance in her area, but she says she's not against urban density.

"A number of our neighbors have garage apartments, granny flats, in-law units, stuff like that," Owens pointed out during an interview with KUT.

If the McMansion Ordinance begins to apply to more of the city, those traditional forms of infill housing may become more appealing to property owners and renters.

Sarah Gamble coordinates the Alley Flat Initiative at the Austin Community Design and Development Center. She'd like to see more property owners building smaller rentals on their land.

"We can create these really efficient affordable units for people and families that have lived in neighborhoods for generations," said Gamble.

The initiative helps property owners develop housing on existing residential plots, but only if they commit to green building principles and charging affordable rents. In exchange, the City of Austin can waive development fees and expedite building reviews. The city also has a fund to help subsidize affordable rental development that has, in the past, been very successful. So successful, that it's out of money.

But Rebecca Giello with Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development says her department is expecting more funding for that in fiscal year 2011. In the meantime City Council will take up the McMansion expansion this Thursday.

— Mose Buchele

This is a news article, created Tuesday, August 03, 2010 (1 day ago). | [print](#)

Attached Files

Sounds

Click the 'play' button to hear the audio clips. The first sound listed plays the same sound as the small convenience button, above.

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Sarah Gamble, architect for the Austin Community Design and Development Center, stands near models of alley flats that have been recently constructed around town.

[Click the image to see a larger version.](#)

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WHAT FITS IN YOUR BACKYARD?

ALLEY FLAT INITIATIVE

Sarah Morgan *Photos provided by Alley Flat Initiative*

Feel like living in Austin is eating up more and more of your paycheck each month? Well, you're right, and the growing expense is due, in large part, to ever-increasing housing costs. The situation is even more dire for Austin's lower-income populations. However, the Alley Flat Initiative has a plan—and it's right in your backyard.

"We are basically addressing this affordable housing shortage by utilizing the existing fabric of the city," explains Sarah Gamble, an architect and the coordinator of the Alley Flat Initiative (AFI). Inspired by a 2005 University of Texas Sustainable Design and Development Workshop that found an underutilized, and often deserted, network of alleys throughout the East Austin community, AFI set out to find a way to use these alleys and the attached oversized residential lots to build what they dubbed "Alley Flats"—small, sustainable, and affordable structures built behind existing homes.

"Adding these units adds no additional burden to the existing structure, and

you're utilizing land that is already owned by someone," says Gamble.

The Initiative is a partnership between the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation, the University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development, and the Austin Community Design and Development Center. Each organization plays a part in finding potential land for an alley flat, contracting a pro-bono designer, and managing the construction of the unit as well as monitoring its success after completion.

The idea of building a garage apartment or additional rental unit on your property is certainly not a new one, but Gamble says many of these other

structures are not representing a sustainable model supportive of the existing residents and their needs.

"There are a lot of examples of bad alley flats," Gamble says. "They have promoted gentrification and in-filled neighborhoods...in terms of longevity, these things have really caused property taxes to rise and pushed out long-term residents."

The first AFI structure was completed in 2008. The 700 square-foot flat features solar panels, a tankless hotwater heater, rainwater barrels, and an energy-efficient heating and cooling system, among other sustainable technologies. The flat was constructed



Rendering by
Brittany Cooper.
Designed by UTSOA
Studio Spring 2009.



*Second Street North facade,
photo by Jody Horton*

*Facing page: ribbon cutting,
photo by Barbara Wilson*





on the same lot as an existing home, and the alley flat is now home to the original homeowner's sister.

"So now this one piece of property can house the whole extended family. You're distributing the land cost over two structures, which keeps the cost down," Gamble explains.

The second alley flat, completed last year in East Austin, is another extended-family unit. It is completely wheelchair accessible and houses a long-time East Austin resident.

Affordable housing may not mean what you think it does, says Gamble. According to the U.S. government, to officially qualify as affordable, your total housing costs including rent and utilities should take up no more than 30 percent of your income. A 2008 comprehensive housing market study conducted by the City of Austin's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office found that Austin's housing costs have risen 85 percent



So now this one piece of property can house the whole extended family. You're distributing the land cost over two structures, which keeps the cost down.

SARAH GAMBLE, ARCHITECT, COORDINATOR, ALLEY FLAT INITIATIVE

in the past decade. Looking at Austin residents earning less than \$20,000 per year (approximately 44,700 renters), only 7,150 housing options were considered "affordable" for this population.

"We are short 37,600 units of affordable housing," Gamble says. "One in six of those people are students. So that's a pretty bold number."

Along with a large number of students, that number includes seniors living on fixed incomes, retail, housekeeping, and grocery workers, and single parents, according to the study.

"I think with our current zoning and codes, there's about 3,000 potential

sites for alley flat units in our city with the current lot sizes," says Gamble.

Ten additional alley flats are currently in the design process. AFI will begin construction on the first five this year.

"We're trying to influence the comprehensive planning process that the city is working on, and trying to get more public dialogue about affordable housing to promote this as one of many options," Gamble says. □

—
AFI currently has an exhibit at City Hall called "Affordable Housing: What's in Your Backyard?" that runs until April 9. www.thealleyflatinitiative.org

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Building group unveils ‘sustainable’ housing prototype

By Dylan Clement

Daily Texan Staff

Published: Friday, August 28, 2009

Updated: Wednesday, September 23, 2009

A sustainable building group affiliated with UT’s School of Architecture unveiled a prototype of an environmentally-friendly housing project in East Austin on Thursday.

More than 140 people, including U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Texas, celebrated the completion of the Lydia Street house, constructed by the Alley Flat Initiative, whose goal is to provide sustainable, green, reasonably-priced housing alternatives for Austin.

UT architecture students designed the basic form of the house in spring of 2007. Another group of architecture students participated in the construction of the project for five weeks this summer. They painted the house, installed the fence, built the portico over the door and designed and formed the entire landscape of the property.

Steven Moore, co-director of the UT Center for Sustainable Development, said the housing prototypes created by the initiative are affordable and green because of their design, the materials used to build them and technical systems installed in them, including high-efficiency air conditioners and low-flush toilets.

Strategically placed windows and shades, combined with high volumes of space inside the building, decreases the need for air conditioning. Such innovations and a myriad of others allowed the new house to receive a five star efficiency rating from Austin Energy, the city’s electricity provider.

The Lydia Street house was the second sustainable-building project Alley Flat has completed. It unveiled the first prototype home, also in East Austin, in June 2008.

Aside from providing “greener” housing designs, the Alley Flat Initiative helps the greater Austin community by creating housing within the city limits, Moore said.

“We can make our cities denser, without making the city dramatically different,” he said. Traditionally, “we go out to the urban edge where land is cheaper and we make new streets and



Rachel Colson/The Daily Texan

Congressman Lloyd Doggett, Mario Renteria, Mark Rogers, Margaret Renteria and Sarah Gamble prepare for the ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion an energy-efficient housing project in East Austin.

extend water lines, all of which are hugely expensive projects.”

Despite the smaller environmental impact of the prototype home and more efficient energy use, it remains to be seen what gains the initiative can make on a larger scale. Despite this, Sarah Gamble, Alley Flat Initiative coordinator, remained optimistic and said the first step toward solving global environmental concerns is knowledge.

“A primary component of the Alley Flat Initiative is advocacy and education,” she said.

In an e-mail, Doggett said the program was “an example of the best of what Austin has to offer, and an important reminder that Austin is at the forefront of moving Texas toward a future that is a vibrant shade of green.”

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