

Glacier Circle Senior Community – Notes From Julie Haney

This project isn't so much about age as it is about the need to experience a deep sense of community, something that many of us are missing in our busy lives. These seniors just happen to create community in their 80's, when community is what is most needed to provide support, companionship, and a sense of connectedness. So then, you could say that in order to create a better old-age experience one needs community. One way to create a sense of community is through the creation of a community. I admire these seniors for taking the initiative to create a project like this at their age! They are really rebels taking a stand against what is missing in our society, as well as how we deal with aging. They let the world know that being 80 doesn't mean that its time to curl up and wither away in an institution.

Key Points:

1. THROUGH THE CREATION OF THE COMMUNITY, COMMUNITY IS CREATED (copyright Julie Haney 2006).
2. This is "ELDER COHOUSING" NOT a co-op or commune. It is an age specific cohousing community that offers a supportive network of immediate friends and neighbors who plan to age in place/community together.
3. Each residence is individually owned; each property includes a private yard and patio. The group owns the common house, common yard, driveway, and gardens: 1/8th ownership per residence.
4. The community is a unique model for senior living; the design is based on the time-tested principals of COHOUSING & VILLAGE HOMES (a solar community in Davis,CA), IT IS A HYBRID OF COHOUSING & VILLAGE HOMES
5. Unlike cohousing it is about ¼ the size of a standard cohousing project & cars are designed into each individual residence (like village homes) making it easier for seniors to come & go.
6. Unlike Village Homes, it is smaller, has a common house, and is designed with the senior's participation.
7. Like both Village Homes & Cohousing. There is a beautiful pedestrian common yard that is the focus of the community – this, and the common house, is where community happens.
8. Design decisions were reached through CONSENSUS, it is important to learn to AGREE ON HOW TO DISAGREE. It's a key concept in successful group development.
9. The community is SELF-DEVELOPED without a hired developer. Virginia Thigpen acted as a guide to help the seniors through the rigors of being their own developer – please talk with her for more input, she was a very valuable person in making this project happen. (Having a developer on your team will make thing a lot easier and will take less time to develop your community.)

Solar & Energy Efficient Components:

1. There are three groups of buildings containing the homes and the Common House. Two of the buildings are the homes, which are placed along an east/west axis and all face south for maximum solar gain. Shared walls reduce east and west exposure.
2. Roof overhangs, trellises, and other shading devices provide protection from overheating the interior spaces during the hot Davis summers.
3. The plywood roof sheathing is backed with an integrated reflective layer of attic radiant barrier material; this reduces heat summer gain and winter heat loss.
4. All of the buildings are slab-on-grade and have R-15 wall insulation and R-38 roof insulation.
5. Three homes have photovoltaic panels (solar electric) and solar water heating with a tankless gas water heater for a backup.
6. All of the homes, except one have a tankless gas water heater for hot water.
7. In order to reduce the electrical lighting loads, all of the buildings incorporate day lighting from skylights and sun tubes (tubular skylights) and use fluorescent lighting for general room illumination.
8. All units have skylights with triple glazed prismatic acrylic panels, electrically openable skylights that capture the delta breeze in the summer to help cool the houses at night.
9. All units have a high efficiency HVAC systems, with 14 SEER & 90 AFUE ratings; most have a high efficiency electronic air filtration system, by Aprilaire.

Accessible Design & How This Project Helps People Age In Place:

Integrated design elements that help support a person who uses a wheelchair, cane, or walker were used in this project as follows:

1. Low profile floor coverings, and easy to negotiate concrete sidewalk textures.
2. All doors are 3 ft. wide .
3. Larger bathrooms that allow for 5 ft. diameter wheelchair radius and include wheelchair accessible showers, comfort height toilets, barrier free sinks, and grab bars.
4. The foundations is slab-on-grade with little or no steps; all homes are single story except for two 2-story homes, which were designed with stairs that could be retrofitted with an automatic chair lift and the downstairs bedroom could be adapted to be a master bedroom with accessible bathroom.
5. Bright lighting was important: homes have skylights for daylighting, with optional blinds that are operable by an electric motor; and there is ample general lighting, which is mostly fluorescent to conserve energy.
6. Extra storage space was also emphasized, as many people were grappling with downsizing.
7. All residences have two bedrooms so, if necessary, one bedroom could be used for a live-in caregiver.

Project Architect:

Julie Haney, while working at Macaulay + Architects in Sacramento, brought-in and designed the project. After leaving M+A in 2004, Julie continued to work on this project with M+A during the construction phase.

Developer guidance:

Virginia Thigpen 756-5986 – key player who helped the group with developer issues

Contractor:

Harrison Construction, in Davis

Names of members:

Jim & Sue Saum; John & Nancy Jungerman; Ray & Ellen Coppock Stan Dawson & Peggy Northup-Dawson; Ann Allard; Lois Grau; Dorie Datel; Rich Morrison.

What is the group like?

They are all in their 70's & 80's. 90 % (now 100%) belong to (most were founders of) the Davis Universalist Unitarian church. Most of them have known each other for 40 - 50 years, they see each other regularly through social activities outside of the cohousing community. Some are members of a dream group, others are in a writing group while a handful are in a women's group together. Most of the members are now retired. Their professions included: Psychotherapists, Schoolteacher and watercolor painter, University professor and writer, Physicist, Education college professor.

What were the important early-on design criteria?

Sense of a welcoming supportive community, light and airy, comfort, coziness, interaction, spaciousness, privacy, pleasant views, relaxing atmosphere, familiarity, sharing, places to talk with others, stimulating, soothing.

How big is this project?

The project is located on a site that is .83 acre, there are 8 residential units, 1 common house, and 1 caretakers apartment above the common house. The residences break into 3 types: the bungalow 1023 sq. ft., the cottage 1204-1348 sq. ft., and the townhouse 1536 sq. ft. The common house is 1435 sq. ft. and the second floor caretakers apt. is 891 sq. ft.

What was the project timeline?

The group formed in March 2002, started design w/ Julie Haney, project architect, at Macaulay + Architects, in Jan. 2003, the building permit submittal was in June 2004, the permit was granted in Jan 05, construction started in march 05, move-in was in Dec 05/Jan 06, construction completely finished March 06

How long was it in design?

16 months, from start of design to move-in it was 3 years.

How long did construction take?

Approx 1 year

How much did it cost?

\$3.2 million