DENSITY BY DESIGN

Livability and Sustainability in Urban Redevelopment

Dennis Hertlein, AIA
Principal

SURBER BARBER
CHOATE & HERTLEIN
ARCHITECTS, P.C.
TRENDS
Population Growth

- US population is expected to increase 33% by 2030
- 94 Million more people than in 2000 (376 million total)
- Approximately half of the homes, offices, buildings, stores, and industrial facilities needed do not exist today
Demographic Shift

• US will need almost 60M new housing units by 2030

• Since the 1950’s families with children fueled America’s housing market

• Today these households make up less than 25% of American households, by 2020 it will be less than 20%

• Shift in population segments and household demography have created a new paradigm:
  1. Young Professionals
  2. Couples without children
  3. Empty Nesters
  4. Single Parents
Problems in the Public Realm

- Dwindling Natural areas

- Public Health Concerns
  - Smog, air pollution and resulting respiratory problems
  - Obesity increases attributed to more sedentary lifestyles

- Fragile and uncertain national energy policy

- Shrinking municipal budgets

- Increasing regional traffic congestion
New Urban Dwellers (Market Demands)

- 6 of 10 surveyed prefer smaller lot / higher density neighborhoods than large lot / cul-de-sac communities
  …some Americans seem ready to give up their bedroom communities

- Demand for higher density homes will increase as a result of:
  - 78 Million downsizing baby boomers
  - 78 million children of the baby boomers graduating college
  - 9 million new immigrants

- Generation “D” Matures: The highly networked digital generation begins to purchase and rent homes

- Growth of the “Creative Class” outpaces the “Service Class”

- Young Knowledge Workers Looking for more Urban Lifestyle
DESIGN DENSITY
Urban Re-Development Challenges

- **Costs:** Land, Construction, Process...
- Accommodating the Auto: Traffic and Parking
- NIMBYism & Community Investment
- Zoning/Code Constraints
- Maintaining public space/place sensibilities
- “Green” Development Costs vs. Value
Urban Re-Development Benefits

- Infrastructure already in place
- Shorter travel distances (Live / Work / Play lifestyle)
- Mass transit options
- Diversity of housing options and other uses
Designing Density: Adaptive Reuse

• **True Recycling**: Giving older / obsolete buildings new life

• **Old/New**: Balancing the character of the past and the needs of the future

• **Integration Into The Urban Fabric**

• **Projects**
  1. Muses Block (office / retail buildings)
  2. Bass High School Lofts / Roosevelt Gym Apartments (schools)
  3. Mattress Factory Lofts (factory)
  4. City Hall East (distribution facility)
Adaptive Reuse: Muses Block

- Historic office / retail buildings (rough shape)
- No parking! (off-site)
- Utilized Historic Tax credits
- Tied all buildings together with common circulation
- New life for Downtown Atlanta
Adaptive Reuse: Bass High School Lofts / Roosevelt Gym Apartments

- Obsolete APS historic school buildings
- Wonderful shells / Great neighborhood locations
- Adapted use to apartments
- Utilized historic tax credits on both projects
- Worked hard to maintain original character while bringing up to modern standards
Adaptive Reuse: Mattress Factory Lofts

- Abandoned factory / warehouse complex
- Bad shape / environmental issues
- New uses include residential units, office, and retail
- Utilized historic tax credits
- Had to be very creative in fitting functional living spaces into large / awkward shapes of existing shells
Adaptive Reuse: City Hall East

• Former Sears warehouse / distribution center

• Included adjacent land, newer parking decks & service bays

• True mixed use community to be created in and around the historic shell

• Plan to utilize historic tax credits

• Most important transformation will be to reconnect neighborhoods
Designing Density: Infill

• Infill / Reuse of underutilized sites (replacing the missing teeth)

• Designing The Right Density

• Architectural Scale and Fit

• Infusing an appropriate mix: Retail, residential, office, etc

• Projects
  – Alta West (Westside Industrial district)
  – Inman Park Village (historic intown neighborhood)
  – The Reynolds (Peachtree Street / SONO district)
  – Tribute Lofts (Fourth Ward neighborhood / Freedom Parkway)
  – Oakland Park (Memorial Drive Corridor at edge of Grant Park)
Infill: Alta West

- Former underutilized industrial site
- Existing grid of urban blocks / “Hip” area
- Required re-zoning / density discussions with neighborhood
- Main goals were to create new urban housing for the area and activate the street with retail
Infill: Inman Park Village

- Former industrial site (Mead paper plant)
- On edge of historic neighborhood / along “Beltline”
- Great cooperative effort between sellers, community and developer team
- Created a wide diversity of uses and scales to respond to specific contexts
Infill: The Reynolds

- Former one story commercial building on Peachtree St.
- Part of emerging “SONO” district, connecting downtown and midtown
- Mixed use, mixed income building with street-front retail
- Near transit (Buses and MARTA)
- In-town option for empty-nesters
Infill: Tribute Lofts

• Former liquor store, abandoned sites

• On Freedom Parkway / Great views

• Collaborative rezoning process

• Mixed use / Mixed income building with street front retail and live-work units

• New housing option for Fourth Ward neighborhood
Infill: Oakland Park & Memorial Drive Corridor

- Former underutilized site on major arterial street
- NIMBYism addressed through pro-active community participation, education, and agreement
- Parking – Re-established internal alley for access to buried parking
- Mixed Use – Street front retail & residential
- LEED Certification applied for
  - Urban site reuse
  - Natural Daylighting
  - Special Bicycle and Carpool Vehicle Accommodations
  - Integration of recycled and sustainable products: Lighting, flooring, etc.
  - Low water use / higher efficiency systems
SUMMARY
Lessons Learned

- Intown urban infill is more complicated
- Prices and market demand call for denser mixed use solutions
- No one answer for all sites, customize design in response to conditions
- Often meet resistance but with a good process and a good design, this can be overcome
- Growing support from City of Atlanta is extremely important
- Pride and rewards for successful projects are priceless!
Thank you.

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