



The **Community Builders, Inc.**

East Downtown – Durham, NC



“This year’s winners truly shined in their commitment to beautifying their properties. These property owners not only exhibited good stewardship of their properties, but they truly help to make Durham a beautiful place to live, visit and work.”

*Fred Pugsley, Chairman,
Durham City-County
Appearance Committee*

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EAST DOWNTOWN

The East Downtown Revitalization is an extremely sophisticated neighborhood revitalization effort that will transform a 96 block area in the center of Durham, NC. The targeted area was one of the City’s most distressed neighborhoods. Prostitution and drug transactions were conducted in plain sight and many parts of the neighborhood were characterized by burned-out or abandoned buildings. The former Few Gardens public housing project – 240 units in barracks-style buildings located in the middle of the neighborhood – discouraged previous improvement efforts.



Photographs by Jim Sink

In 2000, The Community Builders, Inc. (TCB) was selected to develop a plan, prepare the necessary funding applications and implement the revitalization of this community, all in collaboration with the Durham Housing Authority (DHA), the City government and many local stakeholders. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the Durham initiative a \$35 million HOPE VI grant which serves as the foundation for this \$80 million undertaking.

The goals of the project are ambitious – to demolish the 240 Few Gardens units, to develop 309 homes (226 rental and 83 homeownership) and to spark a much larger revitalization impacting the entire 96 block area. In consultation with local stakeholders, TCB developed a comprehensive 20-year vision for the neighborhood. The resulting plan incorporated residents’ aspirations for their community and envisioned a sophisticated real estate strategy, moving west-to-east through the community with highly targeted investments designed to attack the worst distress and result in the greatest positive spillover effects.

TCB has employed several innovative strategies to reposition the neighborhood in both reality and perception. Design appeals to the higher income target markets, while ensuring affordability through the financial structures rather than the quality of the homes. The new construction incorporates "defensible space" principles as well as the preferences of local residents. In two areas, TCB is significantly rebuilding the public infrastructure, including a new street grid with sidewalks, street trees and utilities. TCB is also investing significant funds in parks, playgrounds and recreation areas in an effort to establish a community people live in by choice, not necessity.

East Downtown at a Glance

- 309 homes (226 family and senior rental and 83 family homeownership) and all new infrastructure including new parks and recreation areas.
- **TCB Role:** Master Planner, Owner, Sponsor, Developer, Management Agent
- **Sponsor:** TCB and the Durham Housing Authority (DHA)
- **Financial Participants:** HUD HOPE VI, Durham Housing Authority (DHA), North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA), Mechanics & Farmers Bank, Wachovia Bank, RBC Centura Bank
- **Total Development Cost:** \$80 million