

Housing design competition highlights continued rebuilding in North Minneapolis

Written by

Thursday, 11 March 2010 14:19

The City of Minneapolis, the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC), and its Builders Outreach Foundation (BOF) recently announced a housing design competition, "Bearden Place: A Housing Competition in the Artists' Core," as part of a strategy and commitment to rebuilding communities affected by foreclosure. The competition is to design six, live/work units for the site, located at the northwest corner of Plymouth and Sheridan avenues North.

The property is in the Willard Homewood neighborhood, rich in architectural tradition, but heavily impacted by foreclosure. In the past two years, significant resident commitment has focused efforts on revitalizing this neighborhood with a marketing campaign targeted to bringing artists into the community. The housing design competition reinforces those efforts for continued rebuilding.

The sponsors are calling for innovative and creative ideas that address issues and challenges of designing high quality, affordable/entry-level home ownership; spatial flexibility and live/work space; sustainable building practices and materials; design for a range of lifestyle choices and family configurations. Market rate units will not exceed \$175,000, and the development needs to meet MN GreenStar Bronze Certification for new construction.

"Collaborating with the Minneapolis arts and design communities is a great opportunity for the Northside," said Ward 5 Council Member Don Samuels. "The partnership with the Twin Cities Builders Association, architects, and designers is yet another example of how the City is working with others to recover from the impacts of foreclosure in our communities," he added.

"Neighborhoods in Minneapolis heavily impacted by foreclosure are rebuilding with high quality, sustainable housing," said Tom Streitz, Director of Housing Policy and Development, City of Minneapolis. "The partnership embodied in the design competition will be a further catalyst to our continued neighborhood rebuilding," he said.

The competition is meant to harness the skills, energy and ideas of our design community in this rebuilding effort. Participating architects and designers are encouraged to engage landscape architects, artists, social scientists, and other creative disciplines on their teams.

BATC/BOF will serve as the developer and will manage the entire construction process. BATC members will work with the selected design team to provide construction and cost management of the winning scheme, resulting in a built housing project that demonstrates a successful method of collaboration that can be modeled for other development opportunities on City-owned properties of various scales.

"The Builders Association of Twin Cities is partnering on the competition because it fits within our mission as a leading resource for housing information. As presenters of the Parade of HomesSM (tour this spring from March 5-28), our members understand how great design is the real key to making a home truly livable and affordable," said Sue Marshall, executive board member, BATC. "This partnership lets us use our experience and expertise to give back to our community, and through our charitable arm, Builders Outreach Foundation, we can assist the team in numerous ways in the management of the construction project," she added.

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“The Builders Association is excited to work with the City on this important project,” said 2010 BATC President Gary Aulik. “Giving back to the community is a key component in our organization’s mission, along with creating quality, durable and affordable homes for Twin Cities families,” he added.

Submissions are due Wednesday, April 21, 5pm to the City of Minneapolis, Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, 105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

The Naming of Bearden Place

The development will be named, Bearden Place, after Romare Howard Bearden (1911-1988) whose life and art are marked by exceptional talent, encompassing a broad range of intellectual and scholarly interests, including music, performing arts, history, literature, and world art.

About the Artists’ Core

The Artists’ Core, a community response to the housing/foreclosure crisis, grew out of the Willard Homewood Residents Economic Development Committee meetings begun in the mid-1990’s. In April 2008, there were 65 foreclosed homes in the 16-square block area now designated as the Artists’ Core. Today, there are fewer than five of the original 65 homes on the market. The community continues work to ensure new families are invited to purchase homes.

For information

For more information on the design competition, contact Katie White at katherine.white@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or

(612) 673-5238.

Dates to note:

Site visits are scheduled for March 17 and 29 at noon; submissions are due April 21. A public exhibit of design entries is scheduled for June 2010.