

HOUSING The Portland Observer

Meyer Memorial Trust Awards \$100,000 Grant To Host Development

The trustees of the Meyer Memorial Trust have awarded a \$100,000 grant to HOST Development, Inc., according to HOST Executive Director Howard Nolte. Since its founding in 1989, HOST (Home Ownership a Street at a Time), a private, nonprofit corporation, has built and delivered 36 homes to Portland's low- and moderate-income families.

HOST will utilize the Meyer Memorial Trust grant toward its work to improve people's lives and neighborhoods by providing families a chance to achieve the great American Dream of home ownership.

HOST currently has twenty homes

underway in the Woodlawn neighborhood. Construction on a separate subdivision creating an additional fifteen affordable homes is planned for the same time period in the Portsmouth neighborhood. Additional funding for the projects will be provided by Portland area banks.

"Rising home prices in Portland have created a crisis in the affordable housing market," Nolte said. "We are trying to build and deliver as many homes as possible while this closing window of opportunity is still open. The Trust's award is a wonderful beginning to our goal of raising \$3.1 million for our newest develop-

ment sites in North and Northeast Portland."

"We look upon this grant as a mutual investment on the part of HOST Development and the Trust, and we urge (HOST) to think of us as (its) partner in this venture," said Charles S. Rooks, Executive Director of the Meyer Memorial Trust.

Meyer Memorial Trust was established in 1978 through the bequest of retail store proprietor Fred G. Meyer. With current assets of more than \$300 million, the Trust is the largest foundation in the Northwest. The Trust itself is not affiliated with Fred Meyer, Inc.

Affordable Housing: By Design Or By Default?

BY DUNCAN WYNDHAM

NECDC, a non-profit housing development corporation, develops affordable housing that conforms with the dominant architectural styles in the North/Northeast Portland community.

Through a network of community partners, including The City of Portland, Multnomah County, and community minded architects, bankers, and contractors, NECDC is able to offer solidly built homes with distinctive features at very reasonable prices.

For instance, a three bedroom, 1,280 sq. ft. house with 1 1/2 baths, front and back porches, appliances, and complete security system can be purchased through NECDC for a \$1,000. downpayment, and approximately \$415. (principle & interest) in monthly payments.

NECDC is able to build quality homes at affordable prices due to several factors.

Multnomah County donates tax foreclosed lots, the City of Portland waives building permit fees, and NECDC is able to secure below market interest rates for their buyers through the Oregon State Bond Program.

Further, the use of standard architectural prototypes, contractors who build these homes at a lowered overhead, and second mortgages of \$15,000. obtained from the HUD Nehemiah Grant help to keep prices low.

Computers Used To Create Housing Plans

If you learn it, you will use it. That's the case for home designers and builders, who are turning to the computer for assistance in creating housing plans.

Some firms are using computer-aided design programs and are doing most of their residential building plans on the screen.

"Our office is 100 percent computerized," said Rob Padgett of Cameron and Associates, residential designers. One of the results has been downsizing the staff and still maintaining the same level of output.

Padgett says the biggest advantage is the time it saves.

"It eliminates dimensional mistakes and math errors," he said, "and it allows us to perform square-foot-

age calculations that are more accurate."

Often, a client will decide he wants to make a room a foot longer, add a porch or make other revisions to the existing plan, Padgett noted. The computer makes the changes quickly and easily, and a set of blueprints is just the push of a button away.

Padgett uses the Data CAD program for his work. Two of his designs were used in the Street of Dreams home show last year.

"We do work for approximately 200 builders, including two production builders, Peachtree Residential Properties and Sharp Properties," he said.

Michael W. Garrell, owner and residential designer with Garrell As-

sociates, says the majority of his company's work has been transferred from a draftsman's table to the computer screen.

"Our projects range from little pool houses to large custom homes from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Builders like it because it's easier and cleaner to change," he said. "About two-thirds of our designers and draftsmen use the Auto CAD program."

Greg Marquis, owner of Greg Marquis and Associates, a design firm, is using the program for drafting house plans, too. He has spent hours learning the program Padgett as a frequent consultant.

While the computer is the new draftsman's tool, Marquis said, "it's only as good as the data you put in it."

Developer Proposes Apartments For Eugene

The developer of the new U.S. Bank building in downtown Eugene hopes to continue its city center revitalization work with a \$12 million residential and commercial project.

Seattle-based Lorig Associates wants to replace the city-owned parking lots at Charnelton Street and Broadway with a 192-unit apartment complex and 12,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and office space, according to a proposal the firm has submitted to Eugene urban planners. Underneath the structure would be two levels of city-owned parking for about 740 cars.

The proposal would greatly expand the downtown's housing stock — something city-center advocates say would help revive the district.

The rents would be upscale — \$698 a month for a one-bedroom unit, for example — and Lorig is asking for a 10-year tax break probably worth in excess of \$100,000 a

year to the firm.

The Lorig team will discuss its plans at 11:30 a.m. Thursday at Lane Community College's Downtown Center. The City Council is expected to consider the matter at its Jan. 31

"What we came up with for a concept is very forward thinking," Keller said Monday. "I'm convinced it'll be a very positive part of downtown and the adjoining neighborhood," Keller is on a 14-person committee charged with developing a comprehensive plan for the west end of downtown.

The so-called Charnelton-Broadway blocks, the site of the annual Eugene Celebration, are among the few remaining undeveloped parcels in the city center. The city's past efforts to cultivate the four quarter-block tracts have drawn little interest from developers.

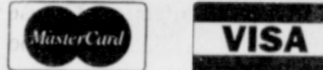
However, the city decided to more aggressively pursue development last

year, as new offices buildings for U.S. Bank and the U.S. Bankruptcy Court filled in the west side of the city center. Also, software firm Symantec Corp. rapidly expanded its operations just east of the Charnelton-Broadway site.

In November, the city requested proposals from developers and parking garage architects.

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