LAUREL HIGHLANDS VILLAGE

Summary of Smart Growth Design Principles

Latrobe, PA

2009 Smart Growth Award Recipient

Rothschild Doyno

COLLABORATIVE
ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN

Smart Growth Partnership

LAUREL HIGHLANDS VILLAGE

Latrobe, PA

Summary of Smart Growth Design Principles
The Laurel Area Partnership on Aging (LAPA), advocates for the needs of the local senior population and works with local government and organizations. After surveying area senior citizens on housing preferences, LAPA learned that many seniors wanted to stay in Latrobe but had concerns about continuing to maintain their own houses.

Having identified downtown senior housing as a goal, LAPA approached the developer, National Church Residences (NCR) a nationwide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide quality housing and care at affordable prices. LAPA was aware of NCR because they admired their attractive senior housing facility in Derry.

LAPA and the Latrobe Planning Commission identified a vacant site in the Latrobe central business district in close, walkable proximity to many amenities like stores, churches, libraries and parks. The corner site also abutted the more residential Weldon Street, providing opportunities for seniors to connect with the wonderful gardens and residents of Latrobe.

Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, studied the rich community context and sought to interpret and reflect this rich context in the building architecture and urban design. Laurel Highlands Village was complete in May 2007, and is owned and operated by National Church Residences embodying smart growth principles.

On the following pages each smart growth principle is followed by a description of how Laurel Highlands Village addresses these goals through its architecture and urban design.
Encourage stakeholder involvement in development decisions

The Latrobe Garden Society is very active and involved in promoting the success of local gardens. LAPA introduced the Latrobe Garden Society to Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, and through this partnership, they reviewed the landscape drawings and made suggestions and comments that were implemented during construction.

Rothschild Doyno Collaborative’s sketchbook process was used throughout the planning commission and council review process so community leaders could provide meaningful feedback and help improve the outcome.
Activate the neighborhood street, and foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place.

The first floor is carefully situated to provide an accessible path through a front garden. The entry garden serves as an amenity for both the residents and passersby. Ground floor community areas connect interior building activity with the main street sidewalks while resident units have windows overlooking the more residential Weldon Street. Service areas are grouped along the urban alleys.
Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place

Materials and design geometrics draw from the nearby buildings, which range from small-scale houses and historic churches to main street buildings both modern and historic. A varied metal skin creates an identity that responds to the detailed adjacent tin facade as well as the austere metal office building across Weldon Street. Carefully-coursed masonry relates to the limestone of the nearby church further up on Weldon. Colorfully painted concrete board siding relates to the surrounding residences. All sides of the building participates in an open and joyful conversation with the surrounding architecture, reinforcing the special neighborhoods of Latrobe.

Diagram of the site proximity to both the residential communities and the spine of downtown Latrobe, one of its "main streets"
Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place

The site was surrounded by amenities for seniors and a wealth of design inspirations. The scale of the building was modeled to harmonize with the heights, rhythms, and scale of the surroundings. The existing neighborhood buildings impact the form geometry and materials, resulting in a building as unique as to this intersection in Downtown Latrobe.

Interior program is placed next to active outdoor sidewalks.
Activate the main street and fostering a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place

The parade route "Main Street" of Ligonier Street is strengthened by locating senior community spaces fronting Ligonier. The living room, kitchen and ‘porch’ was located with a strong visual connection to the existing sidewalks. The seniors enjoy sitting outside on the community porch to watch people, or waiting inside while overlooking the garden.
Activate the main street and fostering a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place

At the corner of Ligonier and Weldon Streets, a neighborhood gathering spot called the Lantern once stood. The playful metal wall panels, internal community spaces and an outside patio recall this history and reoccupy this corner with watchful eyes, glowing windows, and engaged residents.
Create a range of housing opportunities and choices within a walkable community

One of the driving goals for the project as conceived by LAPA was desire of the local senior citizens to stay within their community with walkable access to familiar amenities. An apartment building for seniors on an existing site in downtown Latrobe suited the needs of the community and these individuals. This allowed nearby single family houses to be sold to new neighbors attracted by Latrobe’s walkable amenities and high quality of life.
Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities

The Laurel Area Partnership on Aging and National Church Residences worked together to meet the identified needs of community residents. This open and contributing building at the intersection of the central business district on Ligonier Street and the residential district on Weldon Street is down the street from the boyhood church of Fred Rogers, make certain there will continue to be “beautiful days in the neighborhood.”
Laurel Highlands Village was developed by:

National Church Residences
Laurel Area Partnership on Aging

with Architectural and Urban Design services by:
Rothschild Doyno Collaborative

WE ARE AN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN FIRM COMMITTED TO A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS WITH OUR CLIENTS THAT INCREASES THE VALUE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT THROUGH MEANINGFUL DESIGN SOLUTION

Graphic design, Sketchbook Pages, and photography by Rothschild Doyno Collaborative. Additional photography by Ed Massery.