Summerset at Frick Park

Developer: Summerset Land Development Associates & EQA Landmark Communities

Key Dates:
1995 City purchased 238-acre industrial dump
1996 Master Plan completed
1997 Environmental & geotechnical studies done
1999 Phase I grading completed
2002 5 Model houses opened

Overview:
Summerset at Frick Park is a sustainable residential development of 713 units being built on an abandoned steel slag dump near downtown Pittsburgh in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood, overlooking reforested hillsides, the riverfront, and an expanded city park system. The 244-acre brownfield site was the largest parcel of undeveloped land in the City of Pittsburgh and is the first large-scale residential development to occur within the City of Pittsburgh in 30 years and the largest since World War II. This development of 336 detached houses, 256 apartments, and 121 townhouses echoes the feel of traditional Pittsburgh neighborhoods while every house is engineered with sustainable design materials, energy efficiency, and low monthly operating costs. Summerset has partnered with IBACOS, a Building America consortium, in the design of home performance standards and green building options.

Project Type: Brownfield redevelopment and new housing development**.**

Special Features

- Brownfield Remediation
- New Construction Market Rate Housing in Traditional Neighborhood Development
- New Urban Community
- Regeneration and Expansion of Urban Park
- Model for Urban Planning and Urban Redevelopment

Project highlights:

- 106 acre expansion of Frick Park
- 8 acres of new neighborhood parks
- 47 acres of streets and boulevards
- 58 acres of new residential development
- 713 new homes (3 phases)

Summerset at Frick Park embraces smart growth. It is a public/private effort that develops existing urban space and a former brownfield while reclaiming, restoring, and beautifying lost park lands and critical environmental areas. This land reuse and land reclamation project of a former slag heap establishes a new high-density urban community and extends and rehabilitates an existing urban park (Frick Park). Summerset is a "new traditional neighborhood" that blends in with existing adjacent urban neighborhoods

The completed mixed land use project is highlighted by:

- 713 new high standard multi-type housing units, including EPA ENERGY STAR® certification for all homes
- Restoration and daylighting of one of the area's last urban streams
- Restoration of the health and biological diversity of an aquatic ecosystem
- Restoration and expansion of wetlands and park lands
- New park trails and a new soccer field

Summerset at Frick Park

Summerset at Frick Park's potential was recognized in 1911 by famed urban landscapist Frederick Olmstead Jr., who saw Nine Mile Run as "*perhaps the most striking opportunity of a large park, ideal for playing fields, the stream, wooded slopes, shaded walks, and cool resting places [that] give a sense of seclusion so rare in an urban area*." Summerset at Frick Park captures this opportunity by restoring and extending the park.

Residents can walk or bike to nearby recreation and commercial districts. The development and park are 5 miles from Pittsburgh's central business district and 2 miles from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University in Oakland, the state's 3rd busiest business district.

The development includes:

- Mass transit
- Park trails which connect with the Pittsburgh riverfront
- Pedestrian friendly streets.

Tax revenues generated for the City of Pittsburgh from land that generated $0 in tax revenue will generate $2.9 million in annual tax revenue and a one time $3.6 million in transfer tax revenue

A collaborative community involvement process insures transparency and collaboration in decision making by:

- Mayoral task force of community groups and civic leaders that initially met monthly and later quarterly
- Regular meetings with environmental organizations
- A three-day charette in 1997 at the inception of the development plan process included all local civic voices in the planning process
- Public availability of all environmental reports and studies

Public Financing

City of Pittsburgh Bond	$ 11,687,766
Land Proceeds	$ 3,101,828
EPA Grant	$ 330,000
Foundations	$ 750,000
State of Pennsylvania – RACP	$ 12,500,000
State of Pennsylvania - Growing Greener	$ 742,080
Allegheny County – LCTF	$ 1,500,000
Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority)	$ 8,235,000
TOTAL	$ 38,846,674

Process of Developing High Performance Housing:

IBACOS has been working with the development team over the past several years to create an overall process by which higher performance housing is realized in all housing types built at Summerset and to assess the ways in which master planned community developers can regulate the quality and performance of the housing that is built in their community.

IBACOS has identified three fundamental activities that need to be implemented within a master planned community:

- Creation of performance standards,
- Education process with the designers and builders, and
- Compliance verification process to assure the performance standards is being met.

Without the implementation of any one of these activities, it is unlikely that developers can ensure that higher performance homes are being built within their community.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK:

The Creation of Performance Standards:

As a first step in the path to higher performance housing at Summerset, IBACOS worked with the development team to create a set of performance standards that all housing will be required to meet. As single-family homes are the predominant building type in this particular community, the primary focus was to create standards for this building type.

Development Team Objectives and Criteria for Housing

The Home Performance Standards for Summerset at Frick Park were created to ensure one of the core values of Summerset is achieved -- provide high quality homes for the residents. High quality construction for Summerset at Frick Park is defined to embody the following qualitative objectives:

- Improve occupant comfort
- Conserve energy and natural resources
- Increase building durability
- Improve occupant health and safety

The Summerset Home Performance Standards have been developed based on a study of traditional construction methods used in the Pittsburgh region. The intent has been to define criteria that will significantly improve the quality of the homes at Summerset and create standards to assure those criteria are met. To that end, careful consideration was given to the following criteria:

1. *Water management and exterior drainage plane* for control of storm water conditions.
2. *Air barrier systems* to control high exchange rates of indoor air for outside air and the movement of moisture through construction assemblies.
3. *Thermal insulation and interior moisture management* to establish a durable, well-insulated shell that improves occupant comfort and controls heat loss.
4. *Mechanical systems and indoor air quality* to ensure comfortable and efficient space conditioning and integration of fresh air for the occupants.
5. *Lighting and communications* to ensure high quality and efficient lighting strategies and adequate ability to benefit from current and future communications technology.

From these five criteria, the following performance standards were developed:

- Site and buildings designed to minimize percolation of water through soil.
- Homes incorporate integrated gutter, flashing, exterior drainage plane, and foundation drainage strategy.
- All homes to be certified as EPA Energy Star® Homes (30% more energy efficient than code).
- A building air-tightness of 2.5 Air Changes per Hour at 50 Pascal pressure difference, as measured by a blower door test.
- Vapor barrier on the interior surface of approximately 1 perm to allow drying to the inside.
- Fresh air ventilation system to be installed in all homes.
- Homes designed and wired to facilitate future expansion and utilization of computer-connected technologies.
- Combustion appliances (except ranges, cook tops, and ovens) vented to the outdoors and vent locations selected so as not to allow combustion by-products into the home.
- Radon and carbon dioxide pre-mitigation systems installed.

These standards were further augmented with prescriptive measures to assure compliance, and recommended best practices are included as part of the *Summerset Home Performance Standards* booklet.

Education and Compliance Verification:

IBACOS has worked with the development team and the builders throughout the design and construction process and has developed a high-level process map for the community that identifies the major steps that need to be taken. This community-specific process map has been further refined to a generic process map to be used as a template for other community developers.

Team:
►Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
►Summerset Land Development Associates, a partnership of The Rubinoff Company, Montgomery & Rust, Inc., Pennrose Falbo Associates and EQA Landmark Communities

Awards:
Summerset won the Engineering Society of Western Pennsylvania's *Project of the Year* award in the Environmental Reclamation category.

http://www.ura.org/showcaseProjects_summerset.html
http://www.summersetatfrickpark.com/
http://www.theresearchalliance.org