

Sustainable Fellwood Nearing Completion



A kitchen almost complete in one of the Felwood homes

Sustainable Fellwood is coming to life, nestled amongst the graceful live oaks. And by the end of April, it will come to life even more as the first residents move into the bright, spacious apartments in Savannah's environmentally friendly affordable housing development.

The residents will find a community with an adjoining five-acre city park planned and great amenities such as an outdoor volleyball court, community center and a community garden coming online through this year. The development partners are planning an after-school program and will equip a learning center with computers.

While the solidly built and well-designed apartments with beautiful views of the oaks will bring in happy residents, they may find the sense of community even more enjoyable in the long run. Sustainable Fellwood

has been designed to create and nurture a sense of community.

"For a community to have a neighborhood feel, you have to have a central place to meet neighbors," said Paula Brockman of The Lane Company, which is accepting leasing applications.

"You want to be able to know your neighbors and be able to look out for one another, and you always want a friendly safe place for the kids to pop into."

And though the sense of community will be big, Sustainable Fellwood is also about less: less construction waste going into the landfills, fewer unhealthy fumes from construction, and the really wonderful bonus of energy efficiency, allowing lower utility bills.

"Tenants will consume less water and less electricity, which should result in lower bills if the cost of utilities remain the same," said Kevin

Smith of Catamount Constructors, Inc.

Those lower bills will be thanks to low-flow plumbing fixtures, ENERGY STAR appliances, compact fluorescent lights, energy efficient windows, good insulation, and other features such as a tight building "skin" to keep heating and cooling bills lower.

In addition to lower utility bills, there won't be unhealthy fumes in the apartments from the construction process, Smith explained. The paint, caulk, glues and adhesives are Low-VOC.

VOC stands for Volatile Organic Compounds, some of which may have long- or short-term adverse health effects, including autism, asthma, allergies and bronchitis.

"It'll be a healthier environment," said Smith, who has a four-year-old son with autism.

Many people experience a real difference in places that used Low-VOC products, he explained, including people with allergies and asthma.

"I think it's great," Smith said. "The job site is going to be contributing for years to come" in better health and lower utility bills for the residents, and by being better for the environment. "I think that it's extra rewarding."

"It sets us apart from most of the job sites in the Southeast," Smith said.

He's also excited to know that many of the workers on-

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education and a struggle for equality.

In the 1800s Jordan's maternal grandfather "played dead" and escaped after coming to the country on a slave ship.

Slavery was abolished when her grandfather was 12, but the runaway didn't know until a white woman took him in, later making arrangements for him to receive an education.

Jordan never met her grandfather, but said, "Slavery is something I heard about in my home almost every day."

Jordan's mother, who earned the equivalent of a two-year degree, served as a role model.

As a child, Jordan (Ed '80) accompanied her mother to the Wilcox County Courthouse. "She knew they would not let her vote but she went anyway."

They turned her away, and as we left a white man stuck his foot out. My mother had the presence of mind to release my hand before she fell all the way down those marble steps. I was terrified and thought my mother was dead."

The Ku Klux Klan retaliated with a cross burning in their yard, and the family fled to Savannah.

Jordan was sent to a private high school in Albany and graduated from Albany State University with a degree in education.



African American Monument

She earned a master's in education at Atlanta University, and after marrying and having a child of her own, returned to Savannah and worked for a federally funded education program on reading at Savannah State University.

It was her work with reading programs that led her to visit a class at UGA. When a UGA professor challenged Jordan to pursue a doctorate, she accepted. "I wanted him to know I was qualified," she said.

She commuted most days from Savannah to Athens and said fellow students tried to prevent her from parking on campus. When she complained to UGA President Fred Davison, he gave up his parking space for Jordan.

After graduating in 1980 Jordan continued her work at Savannah State and became a writer for the Savannah Morning News. In 1991 Jordan was challenged again, this time by a

group of black tourists who asked her why there wasn't a monument to blacks in the city. She then spearheaded a committee and petitioned the city to erect a memorial, setting off a decade of wrangling and debate — first over location, then appearance and finally the inscription.

"My willingness to be confrontational has been a problem all my life," Jordan said. "I'll go to great lengths. I don't enjoy fighting and arguing for what is right, but if I have to, I will."

In July 2002, the statue was erected at Savannah's historic riverfront, the port of entry for most slaves arriving in Georgia. The seven-foot bronze statue — designed by Dorothy Spradley (MFA '76) — depicts a contemporary family in broken shackles.

Today, Jordan continues seeking funds to cover the remaining cost of the monument and is writing a documentary about the project. "My mother would be proud of me ... even though what I went through was nothing compared to what she endured," Jordan said. "We have so much ground to cover. We have to do so much more than any other race to prove ourselves. That's why I keep fighting."

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