

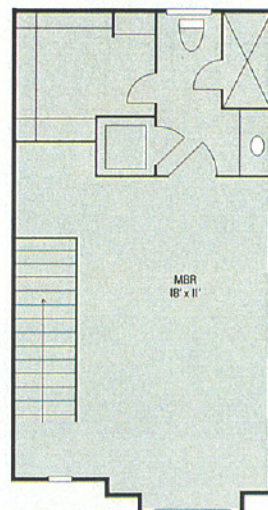
GRAND

ALEXANDER COURT

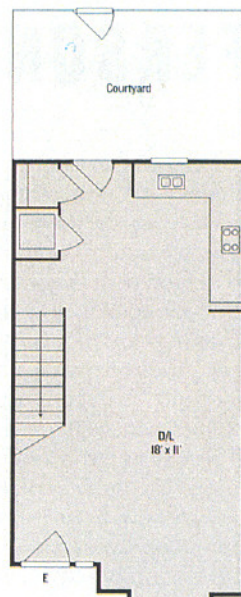
Charlotte, N.C.

SOMETIMES, THE CONSTRAINTS PUT on a project by its location end up being a bonus. Take Alexander Court, an 18-unit condominium development on .69 acres in Charlotte, N.C.'s First Ward, a previously dilapidated region that's being revitalized through a public/private partnership using \$41 million in grant money.

Two sides of the site were enclosed by a 17-foot-high retaining wall, while a third side backed up to an existing townhouse development; that meant very little street presence. Smack in the middle of the site



SECOND FLOOR

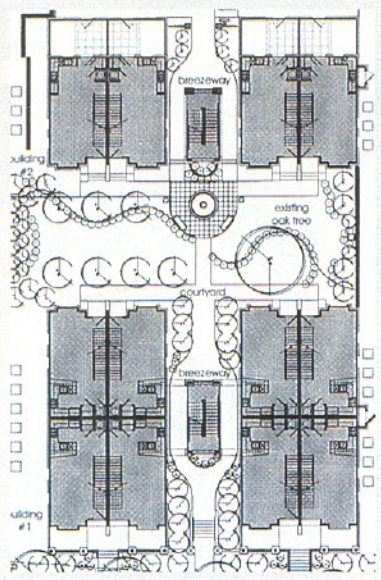


FIRST FLOOR

BUILDER TIP

SUBURBAN LESSON

The only way the mousetrap fits together is by putting the units back-to-back," says Furman. "It's really like a suburban apartment plan, with four units and then a breezeway. It's bringing the efficiency of that kind of product type but re-inventing it in an urban context so it doesn't feel like a suburban prototype."



was a large mature oak; that meant any number of headaches. The solution, figured Charlotte architect David Furman, was to design a courtyard around the tree and flank the open area with two building masses forming a quad. The landscaped courtyard, complete with a fountain, provides the interior units with the kinds of views and energy normally associated with access to life on the street.

The residential mix combines two-story, 850-square-foot, loft-style units with 835-square-foot penthouse flats above. Priced between \$120,000 and \$135,000 the apartments offer lots of bang for the buck. The 15-foot-wide, two-story lofts feature 10-foot-high ceilings and an open staircase to the second-floor sleeping area, bathroom, and large walk-in closet. The third-floor penthouse flats have expansive open plans with 14-foot vaulted ceilings and balconies. Bamboo covers floors in all 18 units.

"The primary tool to making things more affordable in an urban context is by

making the units smaller, especially if it's five blocks from the main drag of Charlotte and it costs less than \$150,000," says Furman. "But people are willing to trade off square footage if you infuse the place with some 'cool.'" —K.S.



CATEGORY: Condominiums; **ENTRANT/ARCHITECT:** David Furman Architecture, Charlotte, N.C.; **BUILDER:** Carocor Corp., Charlotte; **DEVELOPER:** Boulevard Centro, Charlotte; **LAND PLANNER/LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Design Resource Group, Charlotte

PHOTOS: TIM BECHMAN PHOTOGRAPHY