

COME SEE THE INSYNC HOME AT THE 2007 IBS, SEE PAGE 266

HOW-TO
DESIGN
AUTHENTICITY

See page 260

hanley wood

Builder

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

OCTOBER 2006

PLUS:
Creating a Legacy:
Three new inductees
join BUILDER'S Hall of Fame

Make Mine Green:
Sustainable homes
go mainstream

Housing Fraud:
In Georgia, a community
is devastated

What's in a Name?:
Builders get savvy
about branding

**VISION
ACCOMPLISHED**
Builder's Choice
awards celebrate
big ideas

WWW.BUILDERONLINE.COM



THE BUILDING industry has gotten serious, and it may be fair to say the trophy home has lost her crown. As the echo of popping champagne corks subsides, we now find ourselves facing the sobering realities of an affordable housing crisis, rising energy costs, sluggish sales, material price increases, and land wars in our most populous metro areas.

What the housing landscape needs right now are some visionary alternatives to the status quo. Fortunately this year's Builder's Choice award winners deliver mightily on that tall order. Take the Project of the Year, an infill venture that is at once traditional in its homage to East Coast colonial architecture, and yet revolutionary in its marriage of public housing and luxury townhome units, proving that the two can happily coexist—shared walls and all—in one of the nation's hottest real estate markets. It's a prototype that, with some tweaks to the aesthetic vocabulary, could be replicated in countless other locales.

This year's judges were apt to reward builders, developers, and architects pursuing long-term solutions and not just

a quick fix. That sentiment played out in projects ranging from the panoramic to the intimate: live/work units that breathe new life into a decaying no man's land. Small urban pockets of whose site plans anticipate eventual connectivity to contiguous revitalization efforts that are yet decades away. A century-old farmhouse renovation that enhances (not obliterates) the original footprint and that leaves a phantom space in the floor plan for the next logical addition to come.



Our jurors were even moved to do a little creative brainstorming themselves, imagining how one modest pool house might be recast as a fresh model for merchant-built housing.

All told, this year's award winners are not just big on looks, they represent big ideas. And in many cases, their back stories are as fascinating as their front elevations. Dig in and ponder the possibilities.

BY JENNY SULLIVAN, NIGEL F. MAYNARD, CHERYL WEBER, DAVID HOLZEL, AND SARA WALD

PHOTOS: DEAN ALEXANDER





BUILDER'S CHOICE

**Projects blending beauty and brains
prevail in this year's competition.**



GRAND AND MERIT

MIDTOWN LOFTS

Minneapolis

NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE heat to keep developer Michael Lander at the top of his game. City officials had high expectations for the resurrection of an industrial site wedged between two well-known residential nodes in Minneapolis. As the first phase of a larger "urban village" concept, Midtown Lofts would set the tone for a string of contiguous infill projects along an old railway bed that had been recast as the Midtown Greenway, a bike trail system connecting the city's east and west suburbs. The idea was to introduce higher-density, contemporary-style ownership condos to an area dominated by traditional architecture and rental housing.

Stitching the 72 new residences seamlessly into the local grain was largely a matter of massing. With their 7¹/₂-foot windows and sculptured, four-story façades, the buildings along the property's southern edge activate the bike trail and create a colorful promenade. As the parcel stretches north, however, flat roof forms give way to gables, and the structures step down to 2¹/₂-story units that read more like townhouses—a sympathetic gesture to the existing traditional homes across the street.

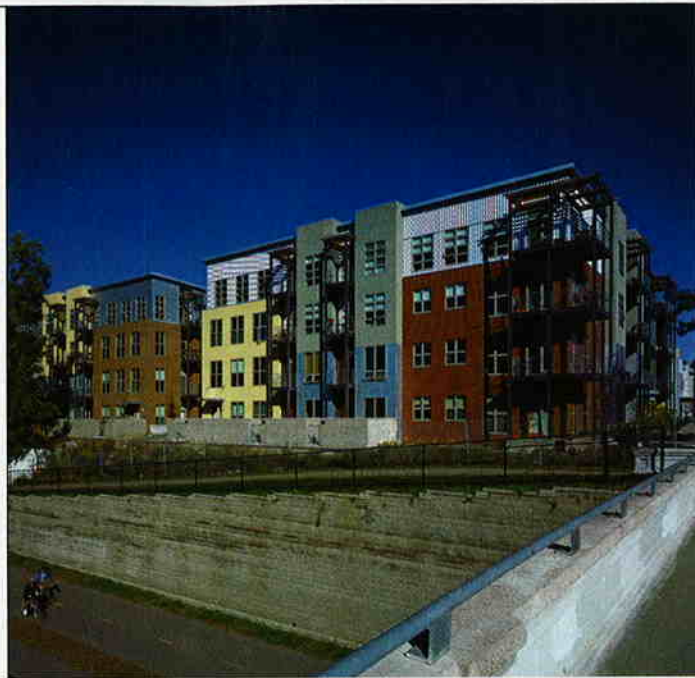
Clad in geometric planes of brick, stucco, fiber cement,

and corrugated metal, the loft units are decidedly urban, yet their pacing remains somewhat classical. "On the north side, we gave the porches a contemporary rendering, but their trellises, columns, and sidewalks create a rhythm similar to that seen in the adjacent single-family and duplex homes," says Lander.

Further proof that the market was primed for an alternative was confirmed on the inside. When given the choice between traditional interior finishes (hardwood flooring, carpet, crown molding) versus contemporary elements (sealed concrete flooring, exposed ductwork, and open floor plans), 70 percent of buyers opted for the latter.

Pushing the agenda a step further, one unit was outfitted head-to-toe in eco-features (low-VOC paints, low-flow plumbing fixtures, Energy Star appliances, electrical dimmer switches) and used as a prototype for green tours and seminars. "We figured educating the consumer about the value and benefits of green building will pay off in the next project we do," says Lander. "I completely believe this [value proposition] is headed downstream, and that consumer demand will become more of a market force in the near future."—*J.S.*

(see page 140)



Categories: Townhouse, less than 2,000 square feet (grand); Infill community (merit); **Entrant/Land planner/Interior designer:** Lander Group, Minneapolis; **Developer:** Lander Sherman, Minneapolis; **Builder:** Kraus-Anderson, Minneapolis; **Architect:** ESG Architects, Minneapolis; **Landscape architect:** Close Landscape Architecture, Minneapolis

PHOTOS: TOP: ALBERT VECEKA/ESTO PHOTOGRAPHICS; BOTTOM: ALEX STEINBERG



WINDOW TREATMENT

“One of our general design philosophies is to use very common, off-the-shelf materials in a unique way,” says developer Michael Lander. Take the lyrical window compositions that make Midtown Lofts such a showstopper. All of the glazing is carried out with standard fare from Marvin’s Integrity series, but the elevations mix things up with a blend of double-hung, awning, casement, and fixed windows. “We used virtually everything in the book, but combined them in different patterns,” Lander says.

