

# Greentree

## Washington, DC



Designed: Winter 1998  
Status: Complete/ Project and Architecture implemented without DPZ participation  
Size: 2.7 acres  
Program: Interior park  
27 houses  
Client: CIH Properties  
Silver Spring, MD



Just east of where East Capitol Street crosses the Anacostia River lies the District's Marshall Heights neighborhood. The neighborhood includes a mix of retail, office, residential, and civic uses. Among the residential buildings are late 19th and early 20th century townhouses and single-family homes, apartments from the 1930s, and 1960s mega-block government-subsidized housing projects. After suffering from several decades of decline, the neighborhood is experiencing a rebirth.



One factor in the area's revitalization was the demolition of the condemned government housing projects located in between Minnesota Avenue, Ridge Road, and Anacostia Road. The resulting two vacant blocks were purchased from the City by the Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, thanks to a donation from the Kafritz Foundation. C.I.H. Properties, which had been working successfully with the Organization to renovate apartment buildings in the area, chose to pursue the opportunity to develop these two blocks.



DPZ was hired to prepare a master plan that maximized the number of detached single-family homes. An earlier site plan by another planner oriented all of the houses toward the center of the block facing a gated, dumbbell-shaped cul-de-sac. C.I.H. and DPZ agreed that turning the backs of the houses to the rest of the neighborhood was disrespectful and inconsistent with the larger goal of knitting the neighborhood back together both physically and socially.



After pursuing several possible schemes, the team decided on a final design that simply faced all of the houses toward the streets, with access to the rear of the lots through an alley. A new park in the interior of the block offered a secure area for young children to play. While it was initially proposed that a perimeter fence enclose the block with gated access from the alley, residents have asked the fencing and gate not be installed until the existence of a security problem is confirmed, lest these security measures add to the perception of insecurity that the neighborhood is striving to overcome. Sales of the \$130,000 to \$170,000 homes have been brisk.