



real estate

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HOME HELP

Maximizing affordable housing efforts

For a wide variety of reasons, many people who work in our community, are unable to afford to rent or own a



Robert Dowling

home in our community. That's why most people in Chapel Hill and Carrboro think affordable housing is an important public policy priority. Thankfully, we are blessed with compassionate,

local elected officials in our towns and county, who support the creation of affordable housing.

We are also fortunate that Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the County all dedicate local tax dollars to support affordable housing. And the enlightened citizens of Orange County voted to approve a \$5 million bond to further support those efforts. To some, it must seem we are awash in funding for housing. But in Orange County, it takes a significant amount of subsidy to buy land and develop housing for low income people - or alternatively, to buy existing housing and reduce the price such that it is affordable.

Although our community has been a leader within the affordable housing realm for many years, it is a constant challenge to try and provide the housing that is needed for the people who work in our community. Of course, that challenge is driven by high prices for land and homes.

Given our high prices for real estate, how do we maximize our housing dollars to create as many homes as possible with the available resources?

I believe we need to use all the tools at our disposal, leverage our assets, and work collaboratively to maximize our efforts. For example, we know that inclusionary housing is a means of creating affordable housing while minimizing public subsidies. It therefore is in our best interests to design truly effective inclusionary ordinances that will create affordable housing without placing undue burdens on developers. If, in the long-term, land will continue to be developed for housing (because people will continue to move here from other places), wouldn't it be great if every new development included some amount of affordable homes? In that way, our affordable housing gets spread around (and not concentrated) and our dollars go further.

Inclusionary housing is just one tool, but it can be a powerful one, if well-crafted. However, we need additional tools, particularly to serve very low income people, those with disabilities and those at risk of homelessness. I am hopeful that, in 2017 and beyond, affordable housing nonprofits and local governments will collaborate to maximize our efforts to provide more homes for those who need them.

Robert Dowling is the executive director of Community Home Trust. Reach him at rdowling@communityhometrust.org or visit communityhometrust.org.



Bring your mid-century modern home to life

The homeowners' "Conoid Bench" by Japanese-American woodworker/architect George Nakashima has the perfect backdrop: floor-to-ceiling Hearth Ceramics Dimensional tile fireplace surround

Story by Sally Keency // Photos by Iman Woods

Arielle Condoret Schechter is an architect with a love of bringing new life to mid-century houses.

"I feel tied to that era because I grew up in a mid-century house," Schechter said.

Schechter is the daughter of modernist architect Jon Condoret (1934-2010). A member of the American Institute of Architects, Schechter specializes in designing modernist buildings with a focus on passive and net zero houses. She has a line of Micropolis Houses — tiny houses that fit many needs from writer's retreats to caregiver abodes and minimalist living homes.

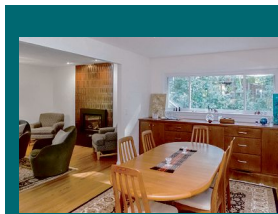
It is lucky for owners of mid-century houses that Schechter has a soft spot for them in her heart. She says renovating and remodeling these spaces keeps her connected to "the living, breathing ideas with which these houses still pulse."

An example of one of her recent renovations was a mid-century home in Durham done on a tight budget. The little house needed a change in flow of the public rooms for it to function the way people live today. The house also needed an element of style to showcase the homeowners' taste — a Scandinavian palette.

When Schechter first came to the couple's home, she was inspired by a piece of mid-century modern furniture so beautiful that it begged for the living room in which it sat to be opened up and light brought into the space. Now this "Conoid Bench" by Japanese-American woodworker/architect George Nakashima is showcased

and enjoyed.

What better place than in front of the fireplace, whose drab face, Schechter knew, could be transformed by Heath sculptural tile and light — natural light from new windows and "hidden light" from Gimbal recessed ceiling



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ARIELLE CONDORET SCHECHTER, ARCHITECT

lights.

"We opened up the living room to the dining room; and the dining room to the kitchen and made that fireplace a focal point," Schechter said. "We reorganized the disjointed kitchen to be ergonomic, have a better flow and more storage."

Not only were mismatched cabinets replaced by custom cabinets, but old vinyl flooring was removed and oak flooring installed to match that in the dining and living rooms. The floors were refinished with polyurethane for a tough, beautiful, easy-care surface.

MID-CENTURY continues