Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative
Kent State University
College of Architecture & Environmental Design
How can we design replicable, affordable housing in rural Ohio?
Prior Experience: Post-Katrina Housing Rebuild
UPGRADES

Small, thoughtful investments can transform a vacant and abandoned house to one that has market appeal. Focusing on kitchens and bathrooms may help get the best return on your investment, because buyers and renters tend to notice these areas first.
**OPENING UP WALLS**

**OPENING UP TO THE KITCHEN**

**Pass-through window**
- Provides opening without giving up cabinet space

**Peninsula counter on half-wall**
- Opportunity for some bar-height seating

+ Many older homes have separate kitchens and dining rooms, but making an opening between appeals to modern lifestyles and makes the home feel bigger.

**OPEN THE STAIRCASE**

**Metal guardrail**
- $: Cost depends on complexity of design and choice of metal
- $: High skill level required

**Cable handrail**
- $: Moderate cost
- $: Be sure to comply with building codes

+ If you have an intact, original balustrade, you can save money by keeping it. If your staircase is enclosed, consider removing the wall (with guidance from an architect) and installing a light railing, which can become a design feature.

**ENLARGING BEDROOMS**

+ Many older houses have multiple small rooms. Modern families often desire larger spaces. Removing a common wall between two small bedrooms is a relatively easy way to make one larger. Be careful not to demolish a bearing wall unless you add reinforcements.

**MAKING A LOFT SPACE**

+ A lofted interior can transform a vacant house and increase its market appeal. This technique is best confined to upper floors where the modification will not be visible from the street. Some interior walls bear weight from above, so you can't simply remove them without adding beams and columns and bracing the exterior walls. Consult an architect or a structural engineer for guidance.
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- Use vacant land in the OH Land Bank Network (in designated rural areas)
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- Partner with manufacturers?
Discussion Questions
What are the current barriers to affordability?
Who is the client?

- demographics of those most in need of this sort of program?
- elderly/aging-in-place? families with children? varies based on community?
- existing residents currently living in substandard housing? new residents/families looking for housing? some combination?
What is the density?

- infill housing in small towns
- any interest in multi-unit / duplex construction?
What is the appropriate range of “styles”?
Other priorities?

- energy-efficiency/green building?
- housing for people with disabilities or special needs?
Modular/prefabricated housing - pros and cons?
Who should we partner with?

• local contractors?
• housing manufacturers?
thank you!

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