



The existing housing project (lower left) was composed of identical low-rise buildings oriented towards interior spaces that did not meet the needs of residents or the surrounding community. The new master plan (above) uses a variety of street-oriented duplex, live/work, and “carriage” flats to create individual open spaces and define streets and alleys as public spaces.

Calthorpe Associates helped the City of Denver and the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) prepare the original grant application to fund the transformation and revitalization of seven blocks of dilapidated public housing through the federal government’s HOPE VI program. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development accepted the application and awarded the City the funds to carry out the transformation of the Curtis Park neighborhood. With funds secured, a partnership composed of DHA and a private developer hired Calthorpe Associates to create a master plan and schematic architectural designs for the first phase, three of the seven blocks.

The layout and design of the existing housing project created many security and livability problems. The long, block-like residential buildings were out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. The buildings were turned away from the surrounding public streets, arranged in an inward-facing, “circle

the wagons” fashion around unused open spaces and surface parking lots. Residents had to walk far to get to their cars in the centralized parking lots. Drug dealing and crime tend to thrive in such “no man’s lands” where no one claims “ownership” or responsibility for these anonymous spaces.

Calthorpe Associates’ master plan places a range of housing types and sizes in public-oriented configurations that acknowledge the street as a vibrant, important component of the civic realm. Open space on the site is now included individually for each unit, rather than all in one space. A more manageable-sized, intimate “commons” sits in front of a new community building on the center block, facing the street. Parking for all residences, whether along streets or alleys, is conveniently located as either “tuck-under” spaces at the ground level of individual buildings, or directly adjacent to the homes.

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

CLIENT: Denver Housing Authority

TYPE: Urban Revitalization

SCALE: 54 units on 12.8 acres; 2.4 total acres of parks and open space; 2,100 sq. ft. community building.

SUMMARY: HUD HOPE VI Redevelopment Plan

DATE: 1999

LINKS: [www.dhanet.com/DHA/Development/Curtis+Park/](http://www.dhanet.com/DHA/Development/Curtis+Park/)

# CURTIS PARK HOPE VI REVITALIZATION PROJECT

DENVER, COLORADO

CALTHORPE ASSOCIATES  
URBAN DESIGNERS PLANNERS ARCHITECTS

In the new plan, units with individual entrances onto the street line the perimeter of the site. Duplex units face onto east/west streets, while live/work units face onto north/south streets. The live/work units are townhouse-type homes with front rooms that can be used for home offices or micro-businesses, allowing residents to work at home and helping increase activity and informal surveillance on the street. Alleys connect through the blocks and are lined with “carriage unit” homes: two-unit, stacked flats.



The new housing types employ a variety of architectural styles that incorporate regional building materials such as brick, in order to blend in with the surrounding, established neighborhood. Along the streets, roof and porch forms alternate. Carriage homes along alleys are smaller scale and use Victorian details to establish “mews” internal to each block.



This redevelopment effort features a diversity of housing types, from duplexes to live/work townhomes to carriage units and stacked flats. Each unit is designed to have a separate identity and places “eyes on the street” for security. This design also encourages physical and social connections to surrounding neighborhoods.



A variety of porch-front multi-family homes face the neighborhood's tree-lined streets. Home designs complement the diverse architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.

