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Stanford's New Faculty Homes: Custom Designs in a Historic Neighborhood

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Photo by Paul Dyer

Stanford University recently completed a residential development designed by John Lum Architecture (JLA) to

address its faculty housing shortage. Situated on a two-acre parcel in the university's faculty subdivision, the project transformed the original two-home site into nine thoughtfully designed lots, creating seven new homes and reserving two additional plots for future development.

The project's success hinged on integrating the new homes into the eclectic historic neighborhood, a priority emphasized during extensive community input sessions. JLA's design team explored several concepts, initially considering denser, grouped housing options. Ultimately, they chose a conventional subdivision approach to ensure harmony with the surrounding architecture.

The resulting designs are contemporary interpretations of classic styles, including Cape Cod, Craftsman, Farmhouse, Monterey, and Spanish Revival. This creative fusion respects the area's architectural heritage while offering modern livability.

"Being mindful of the neighborhood's history and the community's opposition to modern design, we went through several iterations before we agreed on a final concept," said John Lum, AIA, founding principal at John Lum Architecture.



Photo by Paul Dyer

The project presented several design and construction challenges. The steeply sloped lots required innovative solutions to ensure the homes fit seamlessly into the landscape. Additionally, creating seven custom home designs that could be built efficiently as a tract development added complexity.

Each home, ranging from 2,200 to 2,900 square feet, features 3 to 4 bedrooms and 2.5 to 3 bathrooms. The interiors are defined by open floor plans, great rooms with spacious kitchens, and an emphasis on natural light. Expansive decks, backyards, and ample outdoor access further enhance the homes' appeal, fostering a connection between indoor and outdoor living.

All seven single-family homes have been sold, providing much-needed market-rate housing for Stanford professors and their families. Located adjacent to campus, the homes enable faculty to live within walking distance of their workplace, strengthening their connection to the university community.

"Stanford's decision to subdivide two sites into smaller ones is a smart move, allowing appropriate densification and housing equitable for newer professors," noted Lum.

This project is a notable example of how design and collaboration with the community can address housing shortages while respecting a neighborhood's character. As Stanford continues to expand its faculty housing options, this development sets a precedent for blending tradition with innovation, ensuring the university remains a competitive and attractive destination for academic talent.

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