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## Rebirth of Cleaborn Homes project provides spark for architects, general contractors

Premium content from Memphis Business Journal - by Michael Sheffield

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The demolition of the 460-unit Cleaborn Homes will begin before the end of the year, with construction on a \$93 million, 400-unit apartment complex beginning next July. The project, first announced in 2007, is expected to be completed by September 2015.

**Jimmie Tucker**, a principal with [Self Tucker Architects](#), which is designing the project along with LRK Inc., says the delay in the start-up time was due to negotiations with the Memphis Housing Authority on the design and integration of the new development with the surrounding areas. Cleaborn Homes' current residents will also have to be relocated during the demolition and reconstruction. MHA received \$2.48 million from the [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) for that process.

The project also received a \$22 million grant from HUD earlier this summer to help fund the project. That grant is a portion of \$113.6 million in federal grants awarded to six public housing authorities across the country to transform distressed public housing into mixed-income communities.

Cleaborn Homes is the latest project in the city to be funded by federal Hope VI grants, following Legends Park, which had its \$19.5 million, 134-unit first phase completed this summer. It is now in a \$14 million second phase of construction. When they are completed, both developments will be managed by Memphis Housing Authority.

The Cleaborn Homes project's start is coming during a challenging period of business for local architecture firms Self Tucker and LRK. The project represents a steady stream of design work and revenue for both firms.

"We're still recovering and it's a competitive environment," says Tucker. "This is a five-year project, so it'll give us consistent work over that period of time."

Tucker says solar panels will be incorporated into the design, starting with the 80-unit Senior Building located on Lauderdale. Panels could also be included on several of the parking structures in the development, which is bordered by Vance, Lauderdale and Danny Thomas near Downtown. The final number of apartment buildings is still being determined.

"If it works out, we could return power to the development to offset some costs," Tucker says. "It's still a work in progress because solar has significant up-front costs."

The second phase of Legends Park is receiving an estimated \$1.1 million that will be used for the design and construction of the solar component of the project from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Green Communities Initiative.

**Robert Lipscomb**, executive director of the Memphis Housing Authority, which is overseeing the project, says financing for the solar component of Cleaborn Homes is still being worked on, but the project could receive grants similar to those for Legends Park.

"We're just talking about what we want to do," Lipscomb says. "But solar energy is an important part of what we want to do with this project."

Tucker says the Cleaborn Homes design team is incorporating best practices from the other recent developments in the city, but the sustainable aspects were required by the grant.

Along with the solar component, Tucker says the design will incorporate Enterprise Green Community Guidelines, which is similar to LEED certification but less expensive to implement because design teams do self-certification.

"You have a checklist and you certify that you've met various items," Tucker says. "With LEED you have to work through their infrastructure and they certify if you've met their requirements."

Tucker says another major benefit of the project will be employment opportunities, mainly through subcontractors.

"An important part of making the case for the city to get the grant was job creation," Tucker says. "As demolition gets under way, the residents are preparing themselves for this work and they'll be in position to get some of those jobs."

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