

Jacob Price designs greeted Residents suggest park, open space

By Kevin Eigelbach
Post staff reporter

The Rev. Richard Fowler looked over the drawings with the practiced eyes of a former architecture student. He saw elements in several of the plans for the Jacob Price Homes that he liked.

The one he called the most dramatic consolidated the scattered buildings of the housing project into one very tall, very long L-shaped building with rooftop gardens and a community center/day care. It called for most of the existing property to become a park, with a long fountain running in front of the building.

The drawings really helped give a feel for what could be done with the housing project property, he said.

He was looking at drawings that the Eastside Neighborhood Association had commissioned and asked the public to vote on Thursday night.

For a payment of \$6,000 for materials, University of Cincinnati architecture students came up with 10 drawings for Jacob Price and 11 for adjoining Randolph Park. The association plans to present the top vote-getters to the city commission and the Housing Authority of Covington, which administers Jacob Price, association President Bennie Doggett said.

The housing authority plans to ask the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for permission to tear down the 66-year-old subsidized housing community of 163 apartments.

Karen Redmond felt disappointed that she was one of the few Jacob Price residents who voted.

"They don't want to get up off their tails and walk, what, three blocks down the street," she said. "Maybe some of them are afraid the church is gonna fall in, they haven't been here in so long."

The voting took place at the Ninth Street Baptist Church, where Fowler is the pastor.

The Jacob Price design that garnered the most No. 1 votes retained the present configuration of buildings, but with some cosmetic changes.

The designer proposed covering the second stories with a light-colored, stucco-type finish to complement the red brick of the first stories. He also called for replacing the awnings over the apartment doors with a wooden roof.

He also called for renovating the walkways between buildings to include shrubs, old-style streetlights and statues.

Jacob Price residents should see fountains and greenery when they come out of their homes, said Janelle Hocker, of 18th Street. If children grow up in better conditions, she said, they will always want to live that way.

Leroy Wallers Jr., the secretary of the Jacob Price residents council, seemed less concerned with how the complex could look than with who lives there.

You don't put people in housing who don't have any source of income, he said. "The last three or four tenants they put in don't work or anything," he said.

If you give people something for free, he said, they tend not to take care of it.

The Randolph Park design with the most No. 1 votes called for creating a shelter/dance floor/stage, a memorial courtyard and a mural wall, as well as improving the existing baseball field and swimming pool area.

The design that 13-year-old Deandra Moorman liked had lots of space for kids to run around and play, the Garrard Street resident said. It also featured a horseshoe pit and blacktop activity area.

Hensley Jemmott, of Russell Street, wouldn't say which designs he preferred. He said he only hoped that whatever designs the community chose, the city would take them seriously and provide the funds needed to make them happen.