
Modesto Bee, The (CA)

CLOSE QUARTERS

**THREE HOUSES IN PLACE OF ONE
MODESTO'S SCENIC RIVER TOWNHOMES PROJECT PUSHES TREND OF HIGHER
DENSITY**

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Three homes in the space of one is the basic idea behind the Scenic River Townhomes under construction in Modesto.

William E. Leer Construction is building three 1,800-square-foot townhouses at the 1400 block of Scenic Drive, east of Coffee Road. One house, which was sold and moved, formerly occupied the site. "It was basically one big piece of property," said William E. Leer. "A 10,000-square-foot lot that we got three units on it. What we're were trying to do was get higher density there."

Leer said his Modesto firm worked with city planners to change the property's zoning from residential R-1 to a planned development.

"We were supportive of it," said Steve Mitchell, principal planner for Modesto. "In general, we are supportive of higher density in these in-fill areas.

The zoning change allowed Leer to situate the three-bedroom, 2½-bath homes on three 3,200-square-foot lots. The minimum R-1 lot size is 5,000 square feet.

"This shows you can do it on 10,000 square feet. We're pushing the trend," Leer said. "We're experimenting right there to see what the market is like."

The two-story homes, which share a circular driveway, are priced at \$264,000 each. Leer describes them as "upscale" with wood floors, crown mouldings and gas fireplaces.

While a planned development, the homes will be owned individually and without any owners association.

Unlike condominiums, the homes do not share a common wall. A one-inch air space was designed between adjacent homes.

Leer said the homes are several months from being finished and have attracted much attention.

"We're getting a lot of interest, but you just got to get them done," he said. "We've had 30 to 40 calls."

Leer said the project makes a lot of sense in best utilizing available land and increasing housing density.

He is looking for other sites in the city where he can duplicate Scenic River Townhomes.

For more information on Scenic River Townhomes, call 577-3531.

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Caption: (ADRIAN MENDOZA / THE BEE)

The developer of this three-house project on Scenic Drive says the venture is several months from being finished.

Ernie Jimenez, left, and Ernie Jimenez Jr. of EJ Plumbing set up at Scenic River Townhomes.

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