

Project Profile

Dogan-Gaither Flats



Scope:

An adaptive reuse of a historic motel into housing to parolees.

Size:

10,558 SF

Client:

Fourth Purpose Foundation

Schedule:

Design, Spring 2020 - Fall 2020;
Construction, Spring 2021 - Spring 2022

Budget:

\$2,367,446

Photos:

Keith Issacs

Located within a quickly changing warehouse district, the existing mid-century motel embodies an important part of the African-American business history in Knoxville. Built in 1963 as the Dogan-Gaither Motor Court, its adaptive reuse as permanent supportive housing to parolees will provide a source of redemption in an area with a rich African-American history in Knoxville. The Jessamine address was the second location of the important motel that hosted patrons such as Ray Charles and Cab Calloway, after being forced to move from its original location at East Vine Avenue as part of the “Downtown Loop” urban renewal project that would become James White Parkway in the early 1960s. In 1959, the original Dogan-Gaither location was listed in a publication for “Negro travelers,” the Newark-based Nationwide Hotel Association Directory and Guide to Travelers; similar to publications such as the famous Green Book guide for traveling African-Americans.

The new development, known as Dogan-Gaither Flats, will provide counseling, accountability, work placement, and transitional skills training to males returning to Knoxville from incarceration in the 16 dual-occupancy one-bedroom unit apartment development.

The building was in a state of disrepair as it sat abandoned for many years prior to the renovation, and the original floor plan layout had been almost completely rearranged. The design team carefully studied the existing conditions and what little historic documentation existed for clues to the original grain of hotel units and fenestration patterns. Many of the original openings had been filled in over the years, and as part of the renovation were reactivated and repurposed for new programmatic needs. Necessary structural and envelope updates were made to ensure a long-lasting and sustainable building, new gathering spaces were created, and most of the impervious surface surrounding the building was replaced with landscaped green spaces. The architecture plays a key role in the redemptive story of its inhabitants.

Service Summary
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