

Local Sightseeing: The Nest, Ollie's, The Treehouse, Traphouses, Smokehouses, Stashhouses & Other Interesting Places We Know

So much public interest and media attention was generated recently when we demolished a nuisance "motorcycle club" in a South Fair Park residential neighborhood, that we thought we would share a few of our more interesting blight challenges. While the background of these addresses vary, all of them present difficult challenges for Habitat, the neighbors, the City, and for the other organizations working to tackle the problems of blight, neglect, and disinvestment in Southern Dallas.



The Nest- formerly owned by the now defunct Wilmer-Hutchins ISD and is currently back in private hands. At one time it was reputed to be a location of underage drinking parties and other illegal activities. In the most recent DPD incident, responding officers report they could not enter the building "due to infectious waste warnings". Habitat is working with neighborhood organizations and with volunteer attorneys to possibly utilize receivership statutes to force the current owner to repair the property, and if not, to put the property in the hands of local community groups. Costs and strategy to resolve, unknown.

Ollie's Place- long operated as a "cocktail lounge" on property zoned residential. Dallas Habitat recently purchased this property and is now awaiting asbestos removal and abatement prior to demolition. A review of Dallas Police records shows 36 criminal complaints at the Ollie's address since January 1, 2005, including over 20 assaults and aggravated assaults. Habitat will spend over \$50,000 in acquisition and demolition of Ollie's. To check DPD records of complaints by address click [here](#).

The Corner – The owner of this house is now deceased and the current out-of-city owners owe nearly \$12,000 in property taxes. This replacement house was built with HUD CDBG funds for an elderly homeowner whose home was in dilapidated condition. Since the homeowner's death, per the DPD website, this address has been the location of several incidents including four reported assaults, one of which was an aggravated assault. Word in the neighborhood is that there are often 6-10 cars parked at the address. Actions to address the problem, unknown.



The Treehouse-this Jamaica Street house carried this tree for so long that Habitat added it to our regular neighborhood tours and referred to it simply as Jamaica Treehouse. It has been vacant since the owner passed away in 2005 and now has nearly \$20,000 in property taxes due. After the owner died, the address was the site of a number of criminal complaints including murder, assault, theft, and disorderly conduct. Originally built with HUD CDBG funds to replace the dilapidated home of a senior citizen, today the Treehouse

siphons Code Enforcement and Police funds and burdens the neighborhood. We are hopeful that this property is moving through tax foreclosure. The Dallas Morning News includes this address as part of their "10 drops in the bucket" editorial focus on problems in southern Dallas (to read more [click here](#)).

Traphouses, Smokehouses, and Stashhouses – Courtesy of our friends in the City Attorney's office and DPD, here are a few terms to know:

Traphouse—Location where drugs are sold. Drug dealers may reside there or may use a nearby handy open and vacant property.

Smokehouse—Location for using drugs. Open and vacant properties are ideal locations for smokehouses.

Stashhouse—Location where drugs are stored. Unlike traphouses and smokehouses, stashhouses are typically well-maintained with quiet, low-key residents to minimize encounters with authorities.



Example: Suspected West Dallas Traphouse- One of five small apartment buildings in West Dallas with common ownership and nearly \$80,000 in back taxes now due. The apartments operate on 50'x100' lots in an otherwise single-family R5 district. Habitat volunteers and staff witness apparent outdoor drug sales while constructing Habitat homes nearby. The five buildings have 149 police incident reports including aggravated assaults, missing persons reports, and

two murders. Costs and strategy to resolve, unknown.

To see all these properties click [here](#).

News & Notes

Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity recently received the CATEE 2011 Outstanding Non-Profit Organization Award for contributions to Clean Air Through Energy Efficiency (CATEE) and Renewable Energy. The award was presented at the 2011 conference on Wednesday, November 9 at the Sheraton Dallas North Hotel. We are honored to be recognized for our ongoing commitment to green building.