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THE PICKET FENCE, A MODULAR CONCEPT HOME, STARTS PRODUCTION TO ADVANCE THE SUSTAINABILITY, CONSTRUCTABILITY AND LIVABILITY STANDARDS OF NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

Anticipated to open late 2023 in Pittsburgh, The Picket Fence is a “townhome +1” rental home that originated from consumer insights gleaned by the America at Home Study and can be replicated nationwide

PITTSBURGH (July 24, 2023) – The America at Home Study today announced the start of production of The Picket Fence, a vanguard modular concept home with three specific goals to deliver a healthier home with a lower environmental impact. Its design is driven by results from the only national longitudinal consumer study capturing early, peak and post-COVID consumer perceptions of home, including an urgency for increased wellness and eco-conscious living. Americans are eager for immediate action that propels them towards a healthier and more resilient future, igniting the origin story for The Picket Fence — a home that bypasses the notion of waiting for change to come and instead seeks to be the change that people want and the planet needs. The Picket Fence is now being constructed outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at Structural Modular Innovations’ (SMI) off-site factory before being transported in modules and assembled on an infill site in Pittsburgh. Anticipated to open in late 2023, the concept home is a collaborative effort between the founding partners of the America at Home Study, manufacturing partner SMI, DAHLIN Architecture | Planning | Interiors, EcoCraft Homes, and development partner Housing Innovation Alliance.

A combined for-rent townhome and accessory dwelling unit (ADU), The Picket Fence concept home will use a modern method of off-site construction called volumetric modular, which consistently delivers higher quality homes at a faster pace while reducing environmental impact of construction waste. The concept home’s goal is to physically demonstrate a higher level of livability, constructability, and sustainability than seen in other new construction homes, with three specific identified goals: reduce the carbon footprint of the home by 70% and reduce construction waste by at least 90% both compared to an equivalent site-built home; and build a higher-performance home with healthier controlled indoor environments.

“Modular building is gaining traction as a people- and planet-first solution in homebuilding, and The Picket Fence is an exhilarating milestone that will be a testament to the power and effectiveness of the



modular process,” said Eric Newhouse, vice president of innovation at Structural Modular Innovations and factory liaison to EcoCraft Homes. “We can streamline construction practices, reduce construction time, limit embodied carbon and operational carbon emissions, and mitigate the use of non-renewable sources. In addition to including new systems and technologies developed in partnership with the United States Department of Energy (DOE), The Picket Fence will also meet the DOE’s Zero Energy Ready (ZERH) standard.”

Newhouse continued, “We’re addressing missing middle housing and offering a solution for the widespread challenges related to attainability and density. From start to finish, we’re measuring every aspect of The Picket Fence to display how modular construction can transform the way we think about housing and how we can build and revitalize communities across the country.”

A Peek Inside The Picket Fence: Exploring the Design and Homebuyer’s Perspective

The Picket Fence is a three-story home that includes a 2,007-square-foot townhome + 660-square-foot full studio ADU with an entry porch on the ground floor, and a main home above with three bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, a flex space, an entry porch, and a front-facing covered deck. With a modern design and features that homebuyers want and are willing to pay for, the final result will be a home that was built in a drastically different way than traditional stick-built homes, yet nearly impossible to differentiate visually from the interior or exterior. With a deep commitment to making the home as livable as possible, the partners prioritized design choices that would nurture social connections, relaxation and personal well-being — all of which are factors the America at Home Study identified as critically important.

“The insights we gathered from the America at Home Study showed us pressing changes in how people want to live today,” said Teri Slavik-Tsuyuki, co-founder of the America at Home Study and principal of tst ink. “As a concept home, The Picket Fence will have clear and measurable data to track, allowing us to share our learnings. Experimental housing solutions are essential if we want to make a dent in America’s housing crisis.”

The Picket Fence design offers two separate units within the same structure, providing a range of livability options that align with renters’ diverse lifestyles. This two-unit solution not only enhances the efficiency of the living space but also maintains the aesthetic integrity of the home, a feat that would be challenging with a single unit design. By offering proper square footages for attainable rental costs and an efficient modular construction, The Picket Fence aims to support the financial well-being of renters while delivering an appealing and practical living environment.

“When designing The Picket Fence, we sought to create a home that caters to the needs and aspirations of a millennial demographic, providing them with a modern and vibrant living space, all while addressing



their critical housing concerns including affordability, energy and operating costs, and how their home supports overall well-being,” said Ryan White, director of design at DAHLIN Architecture | Planning | Interiors.

A Local Approach and its Scalability for Nationwide Adoption

Tackling housing attainability and pressing environmental concerns head on, this concept home is a controllable template that can be replicated in any market. The Picket Fence intends to be a beacon of inspiration for construction and home industry professionals to not only remain competitive, but also to make a lasting change.

“The Picket Fence serves a much larger purpose, because it’s a symbol of possibility that demonstrates the power of collaborative innovation,” said Dennis Steigerwalt, president of the Housing Innovation Alliance. “Design, manufacturing, and construction professionals can come together to bring rapid transformation toward a healthier future. Your city might have plans to reduce its environmental impact over the next decade, but we don’t have to wait that long. The data shows that consumers want it and we’re enabling a pathway for them to get it. We’re creating something really special with The Picket Fence and we believe this concept home will have a ripple effect that extends far beyond Pittsburgh.”

Further expanding the results of wave three of the America at Home Study, the partners are also developing a for-sale concept home in Pittsburgh, The 412, that will start construction later this year. For more information about The Picket Fence, please visit americaathomestudy.com.

About The Picket Fence Concept Home

The Picket Fence is a physical manifestation of the shifts in living behaviors and needs of Americans during early, peak, and post-pandemic times. Envisioned and realized by three women leaders in the homebuilding industry who also serve as the [America at Home Study](https://americaathomestudy.com) founders, the new factory built concept home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is the collective effort of [DAHLIN Architecture | Planning | Interiors](#) (architect), [Structural Modular Innovations, LLC](#) (manufacturer), [EcoCraft Homes](#) (builder), and [Housing Innovation Alliance](#) (developer). The Picket Fence is a for-rent townhome + accessory dwelling unit anticipated to open in late 2023. The intent is to inspire new ways builders and architects can think about designing healthier high-performance homes using modern methods of construction, while maintaining a focus on market attainability.

About the America at Home Study

The America at Home Study (americaathomestudy.com) was hosted online in three waves, revealing Americans’ desire for home purchases, how they feel about and live in their homes, and what changes they’d like to see as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first wave took place April 23-30, 2020, with a nationally representative sample of 3,001 consumers 25-74 years of age with household



incomes of \$50,000+. The second wave took place September 24-November 6, 2020, with 3,935 responses, and the third wave took place October 6-31, 2022, with 3,000 responses. The America at Home Study was spearheaded by community design and marketing expert Teri Slavik-Tsuyuki of tst ink, consumer strategist Belinda Sward of Strategic Solutions Alliance, and architect Nancy Keenan, president of DAHLIN. The second and third waves were further enhanced with Kantar's MindBase™ consumer attitudinal and generational segmentation, providing deeper insights across 12 unique consumer targets.