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Editorial: A new lease on rethinking old neighborhoods

Whenever we start to worry and moan about residential development in the heart of Lafayette, along come projects that get the blood pumping again.

Not that they're cheap, but exciting just the same.

Things are rolling on Chatham Square, the eastside housing development project that already has achieved its first aim: Get rid of the Bridgeway Apartments. What can we say about Bridgeway that hasn't already been said? It was a real blight.

What's rising in its place is a city-backed, developer-driven \$18 million residential project that has the nearby Glen Acres neighborhood relishing a future full of better expectations.

The homes there look fresh and new - even the ones that are still being finished. What will count most in the long run is how well that redeveloped neighborhood holds up and how well developers can sell and rent the lots to families ready to really make those blocks their homes.

Halfway across town, just north of downtown Lafayette, a three-piece alliance between the Historic Centennial neighborhood, the Lafayette Redevelopment Commission and the nonprofit Lafayette Urban Enterprise Association is coming together.

In the past week, the sale closed on the former Midwest Rentals property on North Fifth Street. What's different on this redevelopment project in the works is that neighbors have put up one third of the cost out of their own pockets to ensure that what goes there fits in with their sense of the neighborhood. How that project - a set of near-downtown single-family homes - has evolved is one of the most exciting neighborhood projects Lafayette has seen in a long time.

It's all enough to give hope for the unwieldy and vacant Home Hospital property on South Street. Any takers?