



Overview

It's time for a house that is just right. A quality built energy efficient house, a beautifully detailed house clustered with other houses in a garden setting on village farmstead land, an intimacy of space, trees, and water. Village Roots looks to a future where people seek closeness with neighbors and nature, but with an eye towards a reality that demands conservation and sustainability.

It will begin on West Broadway in historic Granville, Ohio, where the oldest farmhouse on the west end of town occupies six pristine acres. In an 1890s photo, the farmhouse is shown standing at the edge of a still young village, looking south to the railway, west to a lone white horse grazing in open pastureland, and east to a spattering of houses dotting the space towards the village center.

History lays the groundwork for Village Roots. People looking to the west for rich soils and generous space founded the village of Granville in 1805. Eager to escape the rocky land and rigid regulations of old-style Puritan settlements, these adventurous forward thinkers yearned to make a new start in farming and to build a progressive community all their own. Some arrived to settle in the rolling Welsh Hills where they grew their own food and raised their families. Others brought well-conceived plans to build an orderly village where libraries, parks and schools were as important as churches and homes. Together these planters and planners grew Granville in prudent, balanced, and respectable ways. Today the town remains highly coveted for the same qualities its settlers saw here more than 200 years ago. Nestled within the boundaries of this village are five surprisingly rural acres of pasture, woodland and former orchard we have owned since 1985. On the sixth acre sits our 1890's farmhouse, barn and gardens.

Village Roots, a farmstead lifestyle choice in Granville Village, has long been in our vision for this land. After 30 years of a few horses and goats on the property, it's time to transition to a progressive cluster of not-so-big homes that harkens to the best of that Granville heritage and that looks with clear vision and intent to a day when we realize we can, we must, live differently in a world where we've used up too much and given back too little.

The grassy tree-sprinkled land borders the local rails-to-trails bike path just steps west of downtown and for ten years was a second home to the Granville Carriage Company. Recently, a farmer's market garden occupied one-half acre of the land. From Village Roots, the charm and amenities Granville offers --- shops, restaurants, merchants, banks, schools and libraries --- are about a fifteen-minute walk along quiet streets. The enduring stability of the town will be reflected in Village Roots where homes will feature green construction that conserves and uses energy, water, and light efficiently. On these acres, we can grow flowers and food in managed gardens within an urban farm setting and live together, yet apart, as part of a like-minded community surrounded by trees, open space, and the natural world.

The Houses

When our house is over-scaled in relation to our own size, that space won't feel comfortable. Woe, that is the house so often constructed in subdivisions, often beautiful, but inefficient for a sustainable lifestyle. Our vision for the Village

Roots house is described by far more than square footage. Flowering arbors and covered walkways connect clusters of homes to provide intimate spaces and neighborhood friendliness. Each house captures the beauty of space, but with efficiency. Every room is used every day. Every room is filled with details and designed to accommodate the lifestyles of its occupants --- functional space, natural light, integrated storage, rich wood, ceramic tile, versatile bamboo. “Unabashedly comfortable,” as architect Susan Suskana, author of our “guidebook,” the *Not So Big House*, says.

The houses in Village Roots will make better use of raw materials and use less energy to create places of beauty, increasing the quality of life in the process. The houses in Village Roots will not be defined by the technology of the moment, but will capture all we know about how space makes us feel comfortable and happy in ways that benefit from what we have learned and still seek to learn. After all, a house is not an expression of science or technology or building trends, but the basic building block of civilized life. It’s about the people who live in it. It should be just right.

The Habitat

With careful use of the land and the siting of homes, views to trees, the neighborhood garden, the adjacent bike trail and open space will be generous. A barn for storage and entertaining will stand near a working garden where each resident owns a share of the space. The homeowner’s association will provide for general maintenance and upkeep of the Village Roots garden to support and enhance the planting, tending and harvesting experience of the residents. The land, long fertilized naturally by three decades of horse and goat occupancy, is rich and fertile. Synthetic inputs have never been applied over this period of time. Located on the popular bike trail that runs from Newark thru Granville to Johnstown, Village Roots residents will have easy access to the walking and biking path from the private road and walking paths that thread through the property. South of the bike trail lays the village well fields and Raccoon Creek, protected in perpetuity from development.