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A little bit too green

PHILADELPHIA. Despite not looking at one until this weekend, I've been strongly and unwaveringly anti-condo while house shopping. I understand the convenience and appeal when you're young and childless, but I've been wary. Mostly, I can't see myself playing nice with a swanky condo association. I haven't lived in the Northeast for six years now, but my fondness for stoops, lawn ornaments and blow-up Santas seems to be ingrained.



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But I was willing to reconsider after a tour of The Icehouse, a new "green" development in Fishtown. The complex —part new construction, part rehab — is on track to becoming LEED Gold certified, which is the equivalent of varsity letters in the world of eco-conscious construction. A green roof, rainwater recycling system, tankless hot water heaters plus countless other features not only conserve energy and resources, but can save the buyer a ton of money in the long run. I'm not sure what's green about the koi pond, but developers are hoping everyone sponsors a fish, and that's pretty damn cute.

Not that I'm any kind of crunchy saint. According to the mock-up I saw, these are going to be some gorgeous units with bamboo kitchen cabinets and tile backsplashes sexier than Giada DeLaurentis hovering over a pot of marinara.

Thing is, while I could totally fake my way through condo life if it meant to-die-for hardwood floors that didn't harm forests, my kitten is from the streets and proud of it. It would take Stella two days to figure out how to get into the koi pond, snatch herself an especially exotic lunch, and dismember it in front of its horrified adopted mother.

Tempting as The Icehouse was, I think we'd do less harm keeping it real in a rowhouse.

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