

Developer building hope in west Coconut Grove

By JOANNE CAVANAUGH
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Algernon English, 66, was born in a shotgun-style house in west Coconut Grove. He grew up there. Early last year, his family's old wooden home burned down in an electrical fire.

Now, a brand new house will be built on the same spot, part of a new private-sector effort to build affordable houses in the predominantly black, economically depressed area.

"I'm feeling pretty good," said English, who cares for his ill stepfather and a granddaughter. "I didn't have enough insurance money from the fire to do anything."

Andy Parrish, president of Wind & Rain Inc., is developing four bungalow-style houses on different blocks of west Coconut Grove. He is one of the few private developers to build homes in the area in the past two decades.

"I just started looking at the West Grove because it is one of the most underdeveloped pieces of real estate in Dade," Parrish said. "People who rent there need to own their own home. I'm not altruistic, just patriotic."

Parrish, who lives in the north

TO BUY A HOUSE

For information on how to purchase the new bungalows in west Coconut Grove, call the Coconut Grove Local Development Corp. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at 446-3095 or 446-3096.

Grove, plans to sell the 1,560-square-foot homes for between \$77,900 and \$85,000. English's home will cost about \$55,000 because he owns the land, has insurance money and needs help recovering from the fire.

One home at 3416 Frow Ave. already is built, with a wide, pastel-painted front porch. The others will be at 3618 Charles Ave. and 3792 Frow Ave. English's new home will be at 3917 Washington Ave.

Some housing advocates hope other developers will follow suit.

"If we can get the private sector into development, we can help stop the sliding real estate values by putting in new stock," said David Alexander, executive director of the Coconut Grove Local Development Corp.



AL DIAZ / Herald Staff

LOOKING FORWARD TO A NEW HOME: Algernon English was burned out of his Coconut Grove home last year. Developers will be building a new house on his lot.

"We have a problem with flight from the community because there is no new housing stock," Alexander said. "They go to Kendall."

The Coconut Grove LDC is accepting applications for the other three houses. Some applicants are in the pipeline, but new

ones are welcome. A family of four that makes about \$21,000 annually could qualify.

With a combination of bank loans and federally funded loans through the city of Miami, the mortgage payment for each of the three houses would cost about \$500 per month, Parrish said.

Parrish said he understands

that the area — near the corner of Grand Avenue and Douglas Road — has enough trouble to thwart some new development there.

"There is drug dealing going on in the neighborhood," Parrish said. "But we are trying to do something about that."