

Bucking bent toward the upscale, developers to offer 96 affordable rentals in D.C.'s trendy 14th Street corridor

By Michele Lerner July 11 at 5:30 AM



While the well-heeled millennials and empty nesters flock to upscale restaurants, bars and nightlife along 14th and U streets in Northwest Washington and luxury condos and apartments replace affordable dwellings, one group has provided an answer to the challenge of gentrification: Rebuild affordable homes in conjunction with market-rate apartments.

“We used the power of gentrification to help create more affordable housing rather than take it away,” says **Jonathan Rose**, president of the New York-based **Jonathan Rose Companies**. “We think what we’ve done at 14th and U can be a model for the rest of the city and for other cities that face the same challenges.”

A joint venture of the Jonathan Rose Companies, **Somerset Development Co.** and **New Community Partners** is building a new 96-unit affordable-housing high-rise called **Portner Flats** on the former site of the Portner Place Apartments, a 48-unit Section 8 housing development at 1440 V St. NW. The sale of the adjacent half-acre site facing U Street to **High Street Residential**, a residential subsidiary of Trammell Crow Co., for the development of a 288-unit luxury rental building helped fund the affordable-housing building. The market-rate building will also include 15,000 square feet of retail space facing U Street.

“The amazing thing about this project is that from the very beginning, the residents and others in the community were completely in support of this,” Rose says. “We had people asking us if we could hurry along the project.”

[*\[New ‘affordable’ apartments coming to Arlington\]*](#)

“There’s broad support for this, because people want to maintain diversification in the neighborhood,” says **Nancy Hooff**, a founding principal of Somerset Development.

Hooff adds that Somerset started talking with tenants in 2008 about the potential redevelopment of Portner Place.

The Washington Post

“We focus on preserving affordable housing during gentrification, and this was a unique opportunity to work with the tenants and help them determine what they wanted,” says Hooff.

With the support of the partners and the **Rose Green Cities Fund**, a joint venture between Rose and Citi Community Capital, the property was rezoned to allow for greater density. The D.C. Housing Finance Agency also provided an acquisition loan to fund the development.

Construction begins this month, with leasing anticipated to begin in January 2018 and residents moving into Portner Flats in March 2018. Residents of the 48 Section 8 units have been allowed to keep their Section 8 status and have been placed in homes until their new apartments are ready. The other 48 residences, which will be larger two- and three-bedroom units to accommodate families, will be reserved for households with incomes 60 percent below the area median income of \$109,200.

[\[Affordable senior apartments coming to Brookland\]](#)

“We offered the tenants several possible options for the development, such as having affordable units scattered among the market-rate units or having their own building, but they all wanted a separate building with an entrance on V Street, since it’s quieter,” says Hooff. “They wanted a playground and an after-school program, which we are funding with 15 percent of our profit on the development.”

Portner Flats will also have a rooftop community garden and other community spaces, such as a yoga room, as well as free garage parking.

Eric Colbert is the architect for both the affordable and market-rate buildings, which will share a courtyard and a garage. **Jim Campbell**, a founding principal of Somerset, says they are keeping a minority interest in the market-rate development in order to maintain the connection between the buildings.

For more information, visit rosecompanies.com or somersetdev.com.

Original Article: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/where-we-live/wp/2016/07/11/bucking-bent-toward-the-upscale-developers-to-offer-96-affordable-rentals-in-d-c-s-trendy-14th-street-corridor/?postshare=3311468242699848&tid=ss_mail