



Rendering by Vladislav Yeliseyev of Langston Lofts
for Metropolis Development Company

RETAIL MEETS RESIDENTIAL

WHETHER IN OR NEAR BUILDINGS, SHOPS CONTRIBUTE TO LUXURY OF CONDO LIVING IN THE CITY

WRITTEN BY **SHERRY MOELLER**

Live, work, play is the motto of many urban developers, including Jeff Blum, principal at Level 2 Development, who sees the city as a convenient place to reside, work, and find downtime with stores, coffee shops, and theatres right around the corner or, in some

cases, within condominium buildings. Furniture retailers, restaurants, bookstores, and even music venues fit right in with the influx of empty nesters and young professionals looking for luxury in a home without the hassle of a commute.

LET'S MOVE IN

With most condominiums sold before construction on buildings begins, actual move-in dates are highly anticipated. Langston Lofts, one of three recent projects by Metropolis Development Company in the 14th and U streets corridor, was just completed and owners have moved in. Meanwhile, at Lofts 14 One, owner occupancy is underway. The Metropole, 90 new condominiums at 1515 15th Street, NW, near Logan Circle, will begin Phase 2 sales in fall 2006. Sales for all three are by The Mayhood Company.

Names like Louie Armstrong, Cab Calloway, and Billie Holiday distinguish between the one bedroom, one bedroom with den, and two-level floor plans sold at Langston Lofts. The building designed by Shalom Baranes Associates Architects includes 80 units featuring 11-to-17-foot ceilings, hardwood or bamboo floors in the main living areas, Italian kitchens with stainless steel appliances, and modern baths.

This contemporary building, which is located near restaurants, theatres and nightclubs, combines glass, steel, brick, and granite for its distinctive look, while Lofts 14 One, designed by RTKL, transforms former automobile showrooms featuring limestone facades, exposed brick, and tall windows into lofts with great spaces including platform beds.

Busboys & Poets, a new kind of restaurant, bookstore, performance space and coffeehouse, will open in the 7,000-square-foot retail space at Langston Lofts, while Storehouse, a home furnishings store, is open in the Lofts 14 One building. Lofts 14 Two is sold out.

A NOD TO FORMER AUTO SPACES

Lofts 14 One is among the many former automobile spaces that are being transformed into residential and retail buildings. Petrovitch Auto Repair Inc. on 14th Street, NW, between Florida Avenue and Belmont Street, for instance, will become View 14, a new joint venture between Level 2 Development and Centrum Properties Inc. of Chicago. Designed by SK&I Architectural Design Group LLC in Bethesda with sales by McWilliams Ballard, this nine-story,

mixed-use project offers 170 residential units, street-level retail, and underground parking.

This hot Columbia Heights area is changing the streetscape north of U Street, Blum says. David Franco, principal at Level 2 Development, and Blum see the energy of mixing retail and residential as a benefit not only for this area, but also for the city as a whole. With View 14, Langston Lofts, The Flats at Union Row by PN Hoffman, and the typically suburban restaurants opening nearby, the entire neighborhood is shifting, Blum says. "This is creating a great place for people to live, work, and play."

HISTORIC RETAIL AND RESIDENTIAL

Concrete columns, ceiling beams, and industrial elements, such as steel frames and warehouse-style windows in the former RL Taylor Motor Co. showroom and Ware's Department Store, will give an historic loft-style feel to the new T Street Flats in the 14th Street area. Developed by West Group Development Company and Ellis Development Group, T Street Flats will consist of 40

units with about half of the flats in the historic buildings and half in the new addition.

There is a vibrant retail community in this area, says Stan Voudrie, vice president of West Group Development Company, with this building offering ground floor retail along

14th Street. The condominiums' interior amenities will be sleek, says Voudrie, adding that there will be two distinct spaces – one with an historic edge like a traditional New York loft and one with more of a contemporary look highlighting glass and steel. The design is by SORG Architects with sales and marketing by Urban Pace. Sales will begin in late fall.

"DC HAS FOUND ITS PULSE AND IS A COOL PLACE TO LIVE NOW," SAYS GARY COHEN, PRESIDENT OF WILLCO RESIDENTIAL.

IN A ROW

Residents in the Dupont Circle and West End areas are excited about the development of Jefferson Row, says Gary Cohen, president of Willco Residential. Developed by Willco Residential and McCullough Construction, Jefferson Row was



Rendering by Robert Becker of The Metropole for Metropolis Development Company



Rendering by Pavel Zhurov of Lofts 14 One living room for Metropolis Development Company



Rendering by SK&I Architectural Design Group LLC of View 14 for Level 2 Development and Centrum Properties Inc.



Rendering by Scowcroft Studios of Jefferson Row for Willco Residential and McCullough Construction



Rendering by SORG Architects of T Street Flats for West Group Development Company and Ellis Development Group



Rendering by BBG-BBGM of 2501 Pennsylvania for Intrepid Real Estate

originally built as four late 1800s townhomes but was later used as commercial space. Now Cohen and McCullough plan to retain the historic facades, but add 21,000 square feet of new space where the parking lot in the rear now stands. Residents are hoping it will have a snowball effect, Cohen says, and that other developers will convert commercial townhomes into residences.

Totaling 23 units with one and two level condos, including two penthouses with private terraces, these residences designed by Eric Colbert & Associates will offer a “party-friendly” common roof deck, as well as “state-of-the-smart” technology that links all systems, Cohen adds. A few units at a time will be released for sale beginning this fall. Sales and marketing are by Urban Pace.

HIGH END

One of the highest-end condominium projects to be developed in recent years is 2501 Pennsylvania. Priced in the \$2 to \$4 million range, the 18 boutique-style units will range from 2,300 square feet for the smallest to 4,400 square feet for the duplex. Two 700-square-foot efficiencies will be available for residents to purchase for staff or as guest spaces. One upscale retail space will be in this building.

The location alone near Georgetown and the Kennedy Center is exceptional with the 24-hour concierge service adding to the amenities, says John B. Mason, president of Intrepid Real Estate and

developer of 2501 Pennsylvania. In the former Luzon apartment building designed by architect Nicholas Haller and built in the late 1800s, these spaces will retain the front facades, while allowing the buyers to purchase a finished product designed by Brennan Beer Gorman Architects/Brennan Beer Gorman Monk Interiors (BBG-BBGM) or to purchase a shell only and custom design their space. “We think people in this income bracket want to put their own stamp on it,” Mason adds. Each unit comes with 10-foot ceilings and two underground parking spaces. Sales will begin in the fall with marketing by Urban Pace.

CITY LIFE

Empty nesters buying condos in the city and at the beach and younger people not willing to put up with the commute are moving to urban areas like DC, Voudrie says. “People are getting comfortable with a little less space.” Instead of big dinner parties at home, friends and families are meeting at restaurants in urban locales. “DC is a city again,” he adds.

“The city lost its pulse in the ‘60s,” Cohen says. It has been struggling to find it again, but with the lively nightlife and Mayor Anthony A. Williams promoting DC, the city is coming back to life. Moving into the city in 1993, Cohen says he has seen an evolution. “DC has found its pulse and is a cool place to live now.” **ws**

RESOURCES

■ BBG-BBGM

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■ Centrum Properties Inc.

centrumproperties.com

■ Ellis Development Group

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■ Eric Colbert & Associates

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■ Intrepid Real Estate

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■ Level 2 Development

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■ McCullough Construction

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■ McWilliams Ballard

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■ Metropolis Development Company

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