

The Charlotte Observer

DC developer jumps into Charlotte market, with apartment project near Optimist Hall

BY GORDON RAGO

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A rendering of a new 350-unit apartment project that will be built near Optimist Park. Construction is expected to start this summer. The name on the building's facade is a placeholder and is not official. RENDERING COURTESY OF JEFFERSON APARTMENT GROUP

A Washington D.C. real estate firm will start construction of its first apartment project in Charlotte this summer after closing a deal for 5 acres near Optimist Park.

Jefferson Apartment Group plans to build a six-story building with 350 apartments at 200 Wadsworth Place, just over a set of train tracks from the popular Optimist Hall dining hall.

The developer closed on the land this month, paying just shy of \$8 million, according to Mecklenburg County property records. The site is just off North Tryon Street.

City Council signed off on the project in the fall of 2020, approving a petition to rezone the land from industrial to allow for the multifamily project.

The project doesn't include any retail. The land was far enough off the main artery of North Tryon Street that it didn't make sense to do that, Jefferson's senior vice president Greg Van Wie told The Charlotte Observer in an exclusive interview.

Jefferson Apartment Group declined to disclose the total cost of the project, which is expected to be move-in ready by early 2024.

FUTURE CONNECTIONS TO OPTIMIST HALL

As it stands today, the train tracks block an easy walk to Optimist Hall, meaning residents will have to walk or drive to North Tryon Street and around to E. 16th Street.

But, Van Wie said, Jefferson is in discussions with neighboring property owners to secure the rights to build a pedestrian path and possibly a private driveway that would connect to E. 16th. That path would be closer to the train tracks, eliminating the need to go up to North Tryon.

The developer also plans to build out a portion of North College Street, which dead ends at East Liddell Street. That also has potential to connect out to E. 16th Street.



A rendering shows a courtyard that will be part of a new 350-unit apartment project near Optimist Park. Construction is expected to start this summer. Rendering courtesy of Jefferson Apartment Group

MATCHING ARCHITECTURE

The 350 apartments will include studios, one bedrooms, two bedrooms and three bedrooms, ranging in size from 585 square feet to 1,027, according to the developer.

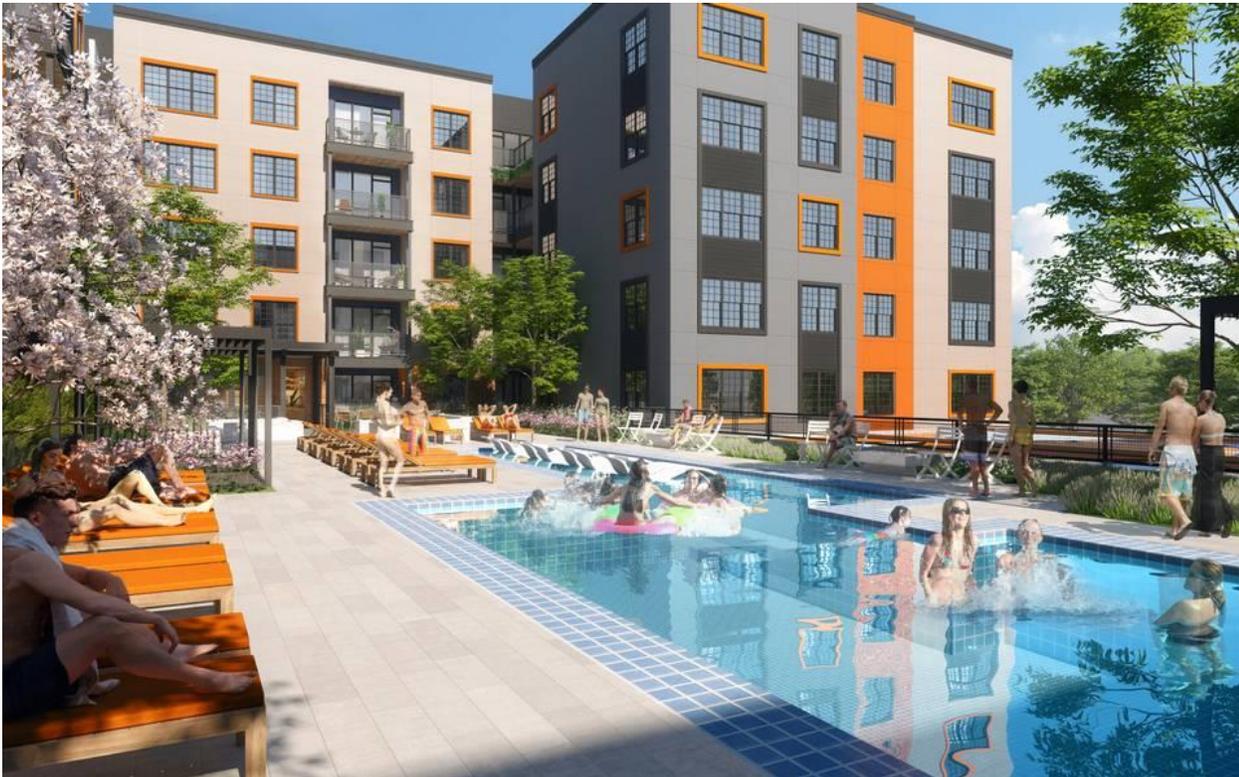
There will be some surface parking as well as a ground-floor parking deck under the building.

Jefferson will have its own on-site property management office, Van Wie said.

The building will include a pool with a space for grills and an outdoor porch. There will also be a fitness center, dedicated yoga space and co-working space. An elevated courtyard will have fire pits with views of the Charlotte skyline.

The land used to house a warehouse that was demolished years ago. The warehouse was a companion to Optimist Hall when it served as a textile mill, Van Wie said.

The design of the apartment building will match that more industrial feeling, with brick and ironwork facade.



Jefferson Apartment Group will build a 350-unit apartment building close to the popular Charlotte dining hall Optimist Hall. Rendering courtesy of Jefferson Apartment Group

NEW CHARLOTTE OFFICE

Jefferson Apartment Group is based in Washington D.C. but has offices in Boston, Philadelphia and Orlando, Florida.

With its first project starting soon, the developer is planning to bring four full-time employees to Charlotte with the opening of a regional office, Van Wie said.

That will include two people on the development side, one construction manager and a property manager.

STITCHING TOGETHER AREA WITH UPTOWN

Van Wie was born and raised in Charlotte, and remembers going out in NoDa, which is not far from the new project. He appreciates how some more recent development has held on to the NoDa's more artsy, eccentric feel.

"We're hoping to build on that," Van Wie said, "and help to stitch together NoDa and uptown."

GORDON RAGO Gordon Rago covers growth and development for The Charlotte Observer. He previously was a reporter at The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk, Virginia and began his journalism career in 2013 at the Shoshone News-Press in Idaho.