

NorthPoint partners with residents to replace vacant buildings with luxury apartments

By ABBY WOJCIK

A stretch of seven vacant buildings along the east side of Kingshighway Boulevard just south of Interstate 64 has been infamous for being ugly, neglected eyesores for decades. Bordering neighborhoods of The Grove, CWE and The Hill, these hazardous houses have been regressing for years.

Following several ownership changes, the properties now have a new owner, and demolition started in the last week of February on these buildings, at 1070 through 1094 S. Kingshighway.

“This is an emergency demolition that is being done for the safety of the people in this neigh-



ABBY WOJCIK PHOTOS

Emergency demolition started Feb. 19 for safety concerns.

borhood because the buildings had gotten to a point where they were falling apart quite rapidly,” said 9th Ward Alderman Michael Browning. “There’s only so much you can do to keep people out of these buildings. We didn’t want to see fire, we didn’t want to see someone get hurt, we didn’t want to see it collapse onto Kingshighway.”

The properties are now owned by Kansas City-based NP Grove Residential LLC, known as NorthPoint Development, working in partnership with some residents. In recent years, they were owned by Drury Development, then transferred to LuxLiving in 2020. Several proposals have come forward with nothing ever actualized. When Drury was a majority stakeholder, the company obtained occupancy permits by some properties, which were rented out, but the others deteriorated.

Forest Park Southeast Neighborhood Association held an engagement meeting on Feb. 20 regarding these buildings and a partnership with NorthPoint Development, who joined the project in November 2023.

Residents Derek and Toni Zimmerman, who own and have renovated several properties in the adjacent neighborhood along Gibson, Oakland and Arco avenues, had



These Kingshighway properties have been subjected to decades of deterioration by neglect through changing ownerships over the years.

been approached with the opportunity to acquire the Kingshighway properties from LuxLiving in 2020.

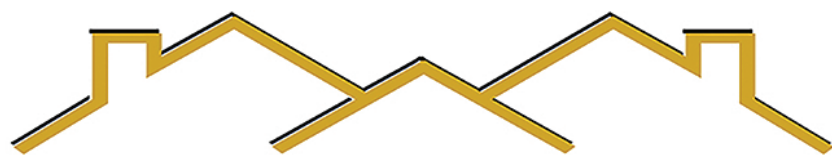
“It was a really great opportunity, and we were ecstatic about it,” Toni Zimmerman stated at the meeting. “But, as you see, these properties have been sitting vacant and very neglected over the years, and they get a little bit tougher to renovate. In such a hard condition and economic landscape, Derek and I decided it would actually be really difficult to renovate these properties one by one, financially. So we decided to see if there is a partner that we can reach out to and bring in to join us with this project. That’s when we

found out about NorthPoint.”

Having fallen in love with the structure and beauty of the neighborhood, the Zimmermans enjoyed restoring local homes and improving the area around them. Now, they are partnering with NorthPoint Development to ensure this project moves forward with care and consideration for local residents.

“This project means a lot to Derek and me,” Toni said. “As we move forward, I’m looking forward to working with my partner to continue to do great things for this neighborhood and the growth of our city.”

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NorthPoint specializes in industrial and multifamily infrastructures. While NorthPoint has built, developed and operated over 5,000 luxury apartments in Kansas City and done other projects in St. Louis, this proposal would be the company's first multifamily project in this city.

The idea entails a luxury, seven-story apartment building with a two-story parking garage and off-site parking. The partners also are contemplating a second building in an adjacent site currently owned by Washington University. Everything is in the early, pre-development stage, with many of the specific details yet to be determined.

Jennifer George, Northpoint's vice president of development, explained that "we are contemplating that site that is still Washington University property, but we're not presently under contract on that so not in a good position to do any kind of planning for the site when we don't have a contract on the property. I don't want it to feel like we have not been forthright that we are working on that."

She assured that NorthPoint officials want to be transparent about efforts to acquire the second site, and that they plan on pushing out future engagement meetings to

ensure they're able to discuss all aspects of the project.

The pre-development stage can go on for a long time while they conduct research on zoning, alleys, stormwater requirements, traffic studies and adhering to the Form-Based Code. The Form-Based Code is a document providing guidance for improvements in the Central West End in order to ensure enhancement of the area's existing architectural character while encourage diversity of building styles. Until completing these steps, they won't bring an architect on board or begin the technical design process.

Some residents in attendance at the meeting expressed concerns over the plans and timeline. One community member stated, "We were all looking to see how the impact of both [projects] is going to affect us, because just giving us one and then throwing the other one at us six months from now is not benefiting us."

"The Form-Based Code and Neighborhood Vision planned for dense development on these sites," Browning added. "The Neighborhood Initiative set out an idea that this is an inclusive neighborhood, that we want people to move here, that we want to have ample housing so that it's not just new neighbors move in and that's it, so that we can continue to welcome new neighbors."



Ninth Ward Alderman Michael Browning (left at long front table) presents at a FPSE Neighborhood Association meeting on Feb. 20.

Browning stressed the importance of new housing development because of St. Louis' decline in population growth. The intent is that with the availability of new housing units, rent prices will remain stable

relative to inflation.

The next Development Review Committee Meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26 at Park Central Development, 4512 Manchester Ave.



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