

Going condo Moorman Home will get new use, add underground parking

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The historic Charles P. Moorman Home for Women on Cherokee Road is headed for a new use that reflects changing times and lifestyles.

Developer Merrill Moter of Joseph & Joseph Architects and two partners plan high-end condominiums and new underground parking at the site at Cherokee Road and Highland Avenue.

Moter and his partners in the project, Tony Stefater with Joseph & Joseph and investor Joe Ferguson, recently bought the property for \$2.33 million, according to Jefferson County clerk records. The purchase included an apartment building with 17 units next door, and the developers plan to convert those to condominiums as well, Moter said.

The old Moorman Home will have fewer than 20 condos, and its exterior will be preserved, Moter said. It's in the Cherokee Triangle preservation district, which is overseen by the Louisville Metro Landmarks Commission.

The building has only a few parking spaces in back, and neighborhood leaders have been concerned about the availability of parking. Vehicles would use an alley to enter the proposed underground parking. "It's going to take some engineering to do that," Moter said. Preliminary work is expected to start soon, and the project is expected to take a year to 18 months.

Leaders of the Cherokee Triangle Association had met with three groups that were interested in buying the building. "We are excited that the ... home has been sold and that something will happen to that beautiful building," association president Lynne Lyndrup said. She expects to set up another meeting with the new owners.

Indigent women had been cared for at the home since 1929, after Louisville distilling baron Charles P. Moorman left nearly \$1.3 million in his will for its establishment.



Condominiums are planned at the Charles P. Moorman Home for Women on Cherokee Road. Developers say it will have fewer than 20 condos. (PHOTOS BY PAT MCDONOGH, THE COURIER-JOURNAL)

The Charles P. Moorman Foundation still oversees and pays for the lifelong care of 41 women who had lived at the home and who have been moved to other facilities. Hit by stock-market losses that depleted the home's \$8 million endowment by nearly half, its board of directors announced in November 2002 that it could no longer afford to keep the home open. The last of the residents moved out in early 2003.

Moorman care administrator Kitten Lawless still has an office in the building but will move within about three weeks, she said. "It's another chapter in the history of the Moorman Home," she said. "It's bittersweet." The three partners in the Moorman project also are developing the Lofts on Broadway apartments in the old Stewart's Dry Goods warehouse at 419 Finzer St. in Smoketown. They are expected to be ready in July, Stefater said.

The Moorman condos will be priced at several hundred thousand dollars apiece, Moter said.

Moter was familiar with the building because Joseph & Joseph renovated the third floor of the Moorman Home about 25 years ago. "I always thought it was just a gorgeous building," he said.

The sale deed requires that the new owners keep a plaque on the building with a likeness of Moorman and the names of members of the board at the time the building was constructed. They also must keep the nameplate on the building and a plaque saying it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The home is across Cherokee Road from the former Parr's Rest home, which is now owned by Highland Presbyterian Church and called Highland North. A church committee that's working on recommendations for renovation and reuse of the building expects to make a final report to the church's governing group June 15, committee chairman Michael Kirk said.

As for the Moorman plans, the church welcomes the new neighbors, and the underground parking "will certainly help the parking situation," Kirk said.