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Cherokee Road plan grows

Building added to condo project

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A \$10 million project to convert the historic Charles P. Moorman Home for Women on Cherokee Road into the luxury Inverness Condominiums will also add a new condo building next door.

The Tudor-style Moorman home has been nearly gutted inside to create 14 condo units -- including several in the attic under a peaked roof -- and seven more will be added in a new building that will face Cherokee Road.

The new building will be three stories in front and four in back, and will replace two 1960s apartment buildings that were part of the Moorman complex.

The site at 966 Cherokee Road, at Highland Avenue, is just west of where developer Kevin Cogan plans to buy the Aquarius Apartments, at 1049-1053 Cherokee Road. Cogan plans to raze them to build a \$20 million, six-story, 28-unit condominium called The Cherokee Grande.

Work began more than a year ago on the Moorman project, after the home for indigent women closed in 2004. Condos should be ready for occupancy in the spring, said architect Merrill Moter with Joseph & Joseph Architects.

Moter is a partner in the project with Tony Stefater, business development director for Joseph & Joseph, and Joe Ferguson, an investor. Given the location of Inverness in the Highlands, it's named for the city in the Highland region of Scotland, Stefater said.

"It's going to be a beautiful addition to the neighborhood," said Eric Potempa, a Cherokee Triangle Association trustee who lives on Cherokee Road. Anne and Ronald Sheffer have reserved a first-floor Inverness unit and will move from an older home on Cherokee Parkway. They also have lived in 1400 Willow condominiums.

Anne Sheffer, 67, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and co-owner of restaurants in Nashville and Birmingham, said her husband has had three knee surgeries and that their home has three sets of stairs. She said she loves the historic characteristics of the Moorman building, but also likes the advantages of renovation and new construction. "My maintenance jobs end," she said. Reclaiming and restoring older buildings "is a gift to this entire community," she said.

The original plan for the Moorman project was to tear down one of the two apartment buildings set perpendicular to the street and convert the other one to condominiums. But following discussions last year with the Cherokee Triangle Association, Moter and Stefater said they decided on a new building designed to blend with the area.



Tony Stefater, left, and Merrill Moter are two of the partners in the Inverness Condominiums project on Cherokee Road. (By Keith Williams, The Courier-Journal)



Breaking up concrete along the front foundation to make way for the new cooling system were Joelrico A. Payne, with jackhammer, and Timothy Byrd. Work began more than a year ago. (Photos by Keith Williams, The Courier-Journal)

One of the apartment buildings has been torn down, and the other is to be razed soon. "Those didn't fit in at all," said Tony Lindauer, Triangle association president.

The overall plans were reviewed in January by the Cherokee Triangle Architectural Review Committee of the Louisville Metro Landmarks Commission, and a few aspects of the plans have yet to be ruled on by the commission staff and the committee, said Connie Ewing, a spokeswoman for Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services.

A committee report says rezoning for a higher-density residential class is required for the new building because of the increased square footage. But there will be a net reduction in residential units at the new building.

The apartments were described as "non-contributing" structures to the preservation district, and the report says that razing them would not have a negative impact. The committee required that balconies on the front of the Moorman home be redesigned to "minimize the damage to the historic building fabric."

The home was built about 1928 and was broken into small rooms along central corridors, with a remodeled nursing-care area created later on the third floor. The condo project has involved removing pillars and supports.

Both buildings will have underground parking -- 46 spaces in all -- and the underground areas will be connected. The parking includes six spaces in a new garage that is proposed in back. The parking entrance to the main building is from Highland, and the parking entrance to the new building will be from an alley.



The Charles P. Moorman Home for Women will keep its original windows as it's converted into the Inverness Condominiums.



"What drove the whole process was parking," Stefater said last week at the site. The number of units that could be put in the buildings and their cost was determined by how much parking could be arranged, he said.

One attic condo will have two outdoor terraces.

"When we saw this space, we got real excited," Stefater said. "We think of this as a little more modern."

Carol Toner, who lives on Cherokee Road with her husband, Gerald, said they "feel very strongly" that the development "conforms to our neighborhood." Toner said her only concern is that a taller building at the site of the apartments would block more sunlight.

George Christian said he and his brother lived for 12 years in the apartment building that remains and for eight years earlier in the one that was demolished. They have moved to an apartment on Everett Avenue. Christian said it's becoming hard to find an affordable apartment on Cherokee Road.

Condo prices will start at \$495,000, and the units will range in size from 1,775 to 3,283 square feet. They will have two bedrooms with 2½ bathrooms or three bedrooms with 3½ bathrooms.

A geo-thermal heating system will draw water through piping from about 100 narrow wells drilled 300 feet into the ground on the property. They will be connected below the surface and will not be visible. One aim is to eliminate the need for outdoor heating and air-conditioning equipment.

"We didn't want to mar the appearance, and it's much more energy-efficient," Moter said.

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