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CLIFTON

New condos will reflect traditional urban design

By **Bill Pike**
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The Courier-Journal

Michael Gross and Reed Weinberg looked toward downtown from a fourth-floor terrace on a condominium building they're developing in Clifton on Brownsboro Road.

"You don't realize how high this building is until you get up here," Weinberg said. "You can see a long way."



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Reed Weinberg, left, and Michael Gross are developing Cliff View Terrace at Brownsboro Road and Idlewyde Drive. (Photos by Bill Pike, The C-J)

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"It's being done all across the country," said Charles Cash, director of Louisville Metro Planning & Design Services.

The Brownsboro Road project, to be called Cliff View Terrace, is the third large neo-traditional condo building to be constructed in Clifton and Crescent Hill in recent few years.

The others are Clifton Lofts, at 2011-2019 Frankfort Ave., and Lodge 820, at 2858-2966 Frankfort Ave. The Clifton Lofts project was finished last year. Lodge 820, on the former site of a Masonic lodge, is nearing completion.

The first condos in Cliff View Terrace should be ready in August, said Gross, director of development at Legacy Homes. Legacy is developing the project with RBW Real Estate.

Cornerstone 2020, the metro land-development guide, promotes such projects because they can encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with a strong sense of place. They are also called infill projects because they use vacant or sometimes underused sites in built-up areas.

Some Clifton residents fought the Brownsboro Road project before it was approved last year, saying the building was too large. "But the building is

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looking better than we thought it would," said Anne McMahon, a Clifton Community Council board member.

Cliff View Terrace will have 30 condos, priced from \$99,000 to \$355,000. The building will have an exterior of fiber cement panels the color of red brick. It will have a distinctive rounded corner at Idlewyde Drive that will give an unusual shape to rooms above it.

In addition, the fourth floor will be set back from the front of the building, so that Cliff View Terrace will look like a three-story building from Brownsboro Road. Some neo-traditional projects use design to make dense development more acceptable.

Two condos will be marketed to insurance agents or other low-impact business users. The others will be marketed to empty nesters or young professionals, said Weinberg, president of RBW. The range of prices could attract residents of different income levels.

Cornerstone 2020 encourages a mix of ages and incomes among tenants in a single project, as well as a mix of commercial and residential uses.

The idea is to reduce the separation of uses that came into vogue after World War II. Before then, urban neighborhoods -- and individual buildings -- included a range of uses.

Mixing uses would provide services near people's homes, reducing their need to drive and promoting cohesive neighborhoods, according to planners.

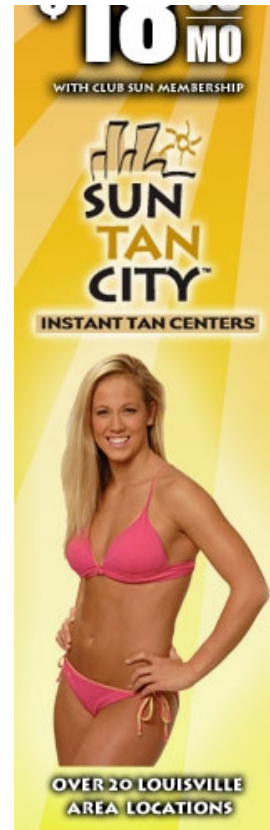
Typical of neo-traditional development, Cliff View Terrace is at the edge of the sidewalk, with no lawn or green space. Placing buildings at the sidewalk is supposed to foster a well-defined sense of place.

The Frankfort Avenue projects are at the sidewalk and appear compatible with nearby buildings because most of them are similarly situated. But, McMahon said, Cliff View Terrace looks odd because most Brownsboro Road buildings are set back from the road.

For example, the suburban-model condo and apartment buildings just east of Cliff View Terrace are set well back from Brownsboro Road, with parking lots and lawns in front.

Cash blamed the old metro development code. "It recognized suburban as normal," he said. The new code, adopted in 2002, took a different approach.

Reporter Bill Pike can be reached at (502) 582-4243.



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