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Developer tackles OTR project

Even for a company that has been involved in rehabilitating properties for more than 20 years, it was a special moment.

Executives of Model Management Inc. joined with City Council members and other officials of the Cincinnati Community Development, Ohio Housing Finance Agency and Ohio Department of Development and representatives of US Bank to cut a ribbon on 19 newly renovated apartments on Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine.

Community Manor One is the first phase of an OTR revitalization projects involving 41 buildings and more than \$30 million in investment. Funded with the help of city and state lending agencies as well as US Bank, the project is enlarging and modernizing units in the historic Kirby building.

The apartments are particularly significant because of their location over the Neighborhood Pride Center, which Model Management rehabbed a year ago as a central location where residents can conduct business with the city.

"Community Manor represents an important component of developing Vine Street and Over-the-Rhine," says Steve Smith, vice president and operations manager for Model Management, developer and general partner on the project.

He says the project includes removing blight, renovating and leasing storefront space to viable businesses, and eliminating tiny "efficiency" apartments that cannot promote the long-term residency that neighborhoods need to develop a sense of community.

Model Management, based in Walnut Hills, has developed or remodeled buildings and communities in Westwood, East Walnut Hills and other areas. But few have generated as much attention as the new OTR project, which transformed 30 inefficient units over the Neighborhood Pride Center into 19 spacious flats and townhomes on the street that city and community leaders consider crucial to the future of the neighborhood.

"We're working with the city and

local groups to strike the right balance of commercial space, apartments, condos and homes," says

Smith, "so the renovation efforts contribute to the overall health of the neighborhood."



Model Management President Arthur Reckman, left, and Vice President Steve Smith stand outside the Neighborhood Pride Center and Community Manor that they helped transform in Over-the-Rhine.

Photo by Mark Bowen