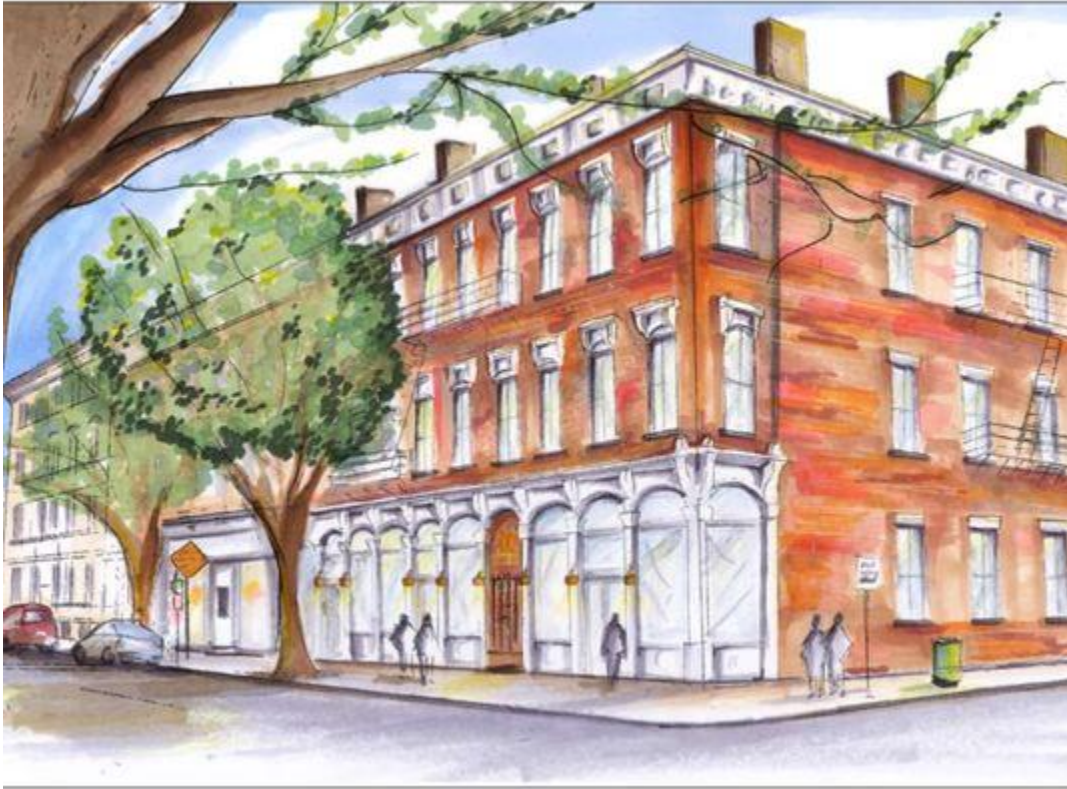


15 new senior apartments opening in OTR

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(Photo: Provided)

Story Highlights

- Fifteen new apartments for seniors will open soon in a 150-year-old Over-the-Rhine building.
- Over-the-Rhine Community Housing and Model Construction led the redevelopment of the site.
- The 150-year-old building has been a saloon, grocery store, restaurant and barber shop.

Fifteen new apartments for seniors will open soon in a 150-year-old Over-the-Rhine building that has been a saloon, grocery store, restaurant and barber shop.

Over-the-Rhine Community Housing led the \$4 million redevelopment of the building at Elm and 15th streets to become what it says is the neighborhood's only affordable senior housing project. The group is hosting a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 20 to celebrate the opening of the Elm Street Senior Housing. Project construction began last year.

Mary Burke Rivers, the group's executive director, said providing a variety of housing options is important to creating a balanced neighborhood that includes young and old residents, families and singles, the rich and poor.

The one-bedroom units in the building are expected to be leased by June. Interested applicants must be age 62 or older, and income restrictions apply.

Elm Street Senior Housing will have a manager who lives on-site and amenities including a laundry room, community meeting space, resident services office, elevator and courtyard. The building is expected to seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design silver certification for energy efficiency.

The nonprofit affordable housing advocate worked with Model Construction and CR Architects on the project. Cincinnati Area Senior Services will provide support services for residents.

The project used state and federal historic tax credits, state low-income housing tax credits and city property tax abatements. Also, the Ohio Capital Corp. for Housing was an equity investor, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provided project support.

Over-the-Rhine Community Housing's predecessor, the Race Street Tenant Organization Cooperative, bought the building in the mid-1980s.

The building sits on land once owned by Joseph Wright of England, who had the first tannery west of Philadelphia, on the banks of the Ohio River. Before Wright bought the land, the site was used as a race track.

Records show Christian Moerlein, a key figure in Cincinnati's beer brewing heritage, may have built the Italianate building in 1864. The building has a sub-basement that was used to store beer at cool temperatures and allow it to ferment for a long period of time. By 1884, the building was subdivided into three parts – Moerlein and John Heine operated saloons in two of those spaces.

Moerlein owned the building for 55 years until prohibition in 1919, when it was sold to Mercator Realty. Since then, the building has had seven owners and been used as rental housing and a grocery store, market, restaurant, barber shop and billiards hall.

<http://www.cincinnati.com/story/money/2014/05/07/new-senior-otr-housing/8820309/>