



Garver's High Hopes for Highlandtown

Continuing Baltimore's multi-family building boom into 2017, the first of 65 new apartments will begin to lease in July as the developer puts the finishing touches on the re-do of a beloved Highlandtown property.

Highland Haus will be located at 3244 Eastern Ave., where the old Haussner's restaurant once attracted regulars and tourists alike. They dined on German specialties like sour beef and dumplings, seafood items like lobster au gratin and, of course, a slice of the legendary strawberry pie. The restaurant was famous for the 150 of paintings and sculptures collected by the Haussner family since it opened the restaurant in 1936. The artwork alone sold at auction after the restaurant closed for more than \$10 million.

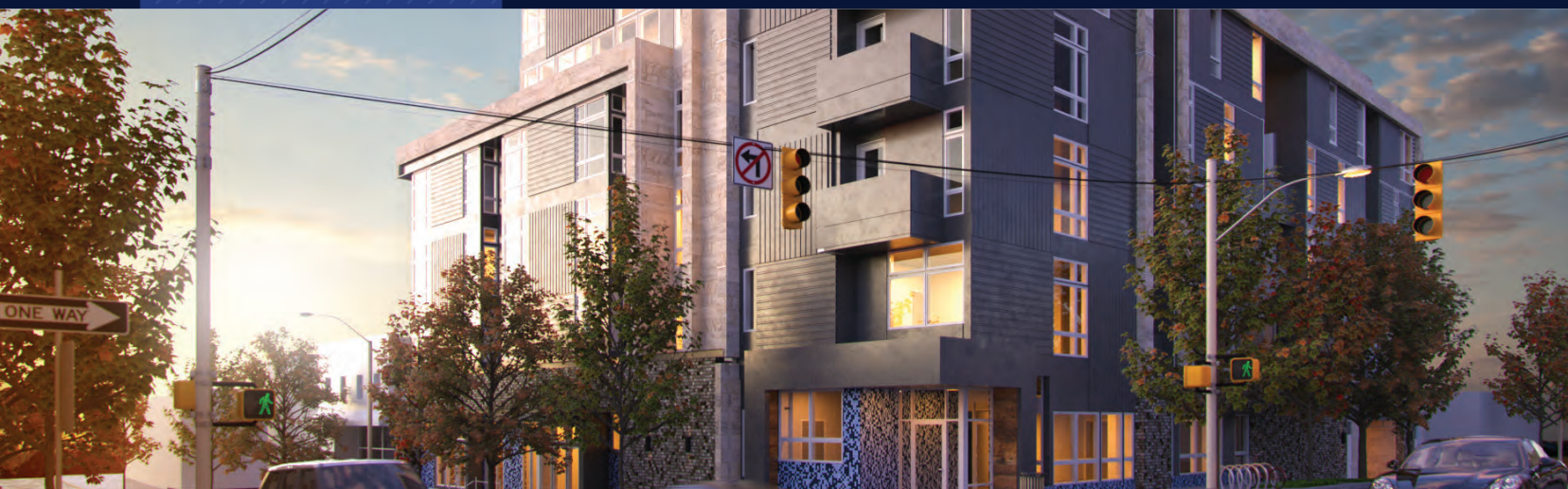


In the restaurant's place will rise a six-story, modern and cubic building with a lounge offering vistas of the city from the fifth floor and 800 square feet of retail just off the street.

Rents are still being determined for the mostly one-bedroom units, said developer Peter Z. Garver, owner of Garver Development Group who is heading the project in partnership with the Taylor Property Group, but they will be less than similar units in nearby Canton.

"Several hundred dollars per month lower," Garver said last week. He declined to reveal the total cost of the development.

Garver is also working on the new office space for the United Way in Montgomery Park and a new project with the Howard Hughes Corp. in Columbia. The Business Journal caught up with him recently to get the skinny on Highland Haus.



Q: You razed the old Haussner's building in May 2016. Was there any apprehension to take down a landmark?

"The building had sat vacant for 17 years. It was in terrible condition and we had looked at many options with this site. I thought we could restore the building, but the roof was literally caving in. The building is composed of five rowhouses cobbled together and it had five different roof elevations — and they all leaked. It looked like a slum."

Q: You have been circling around this project for five years now and finally bought the property a day before it was to go to foreclosure auction on the courthouse steps in 2015. Describe your devotion to Highlandtown.

"I got excited about Highlandtown as an up-and-coming area. I think Eastern Avenue could be the next 36th Street. It's got a lot of institutions there. It is three blocks from Patterson Park and we'll be the only Class A apartments close to the park. There's the Creative Alliance, Matthew's Pizza, Annabel Lee Tavern and next to us is the Snake Hill Tavern, a millennial hangout with a dozen beers on tap. We're at the north edge of Canton — can walk to Canton Square and the water. And in between are two incredible employment centers: Bayview and Johns Hopkins Hospital."

Q: How will Highland Haus function as a new development?

"The retail will be on the first level with the leasing office and we have designed that to be either one space at 800 square feet or two micro-retail spaces at 400 square feet each. There will be a sky lounge on the fifth floor in the southwest corner, facing downtown and the harbor with common amenity space, a deck, grill space and a small green roof. So far, the project is going great. Soon, we will have two stories of poured concrete in place. We're moving along and anticipate opening the leasing office in late summer 2017. Alexander Design Studio is the architect. We hope to deliver the whole thing by Thanksgiving. Haussner's was an institution there, yes, but we've taken a desolate abandoned shell and I think it's going to be catalytic for Highlandtown."

Melody Simmons
Reporter
Baltimore Business Journal

