

# Wainwright transformation is almost complete

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The transformation of the historic Wainwright Building into a modern, downtown-style apartment building is almost complete.

The building on Bute Street, in the Freemason District, has undergone a top-to-bottom, \$25 million renovation.

Builders who have spent the past year renovating the structure into high-end rental apartments are putting the finishing touches on the nine-story building.

Norfolk developer Buddy Gadams is part of the development group that took over the ownership of the building after paying \$3 million for a \$6.8 million bank note owned by JP Morgan.

The building was owned by George Hranowskyj and Eric Menden, the Norfolk developers who are now serving prison terms for their roles in the failure of the Bank of the Commonwealth.

The building now has 126 units in all. Seventy percent of the units are one bedroom, 10 percent two bedrooms and 20 percent studios. Eleven of the one-bedroom are lofts.

Sizes range from 346- to 696-square-foot studios, 510 to 736 square feet for the one-bedroom units, 884 to 928 square feet for the two-bedroom units and around 688 to 1,144 square feet for the lofts.

Rents range from \$825 to \$1,150 for the studios, \$950 to \$1,550 for the one-bedroom, \$1,525 to \$1,950 for the two-bedroom and \$1,225 to \$1,750 for the lofts.

Parking includes a 108-space lot behind the building, as well as 126 spaces at the York Street parking garage. Renters of the studios and one-bedroom units will get one parking spot, and renters of the two-bedrooms, lofts with studios and penthouse-level apartments will get two.

The 92,000-square-foot building's latest incarnation as a residential spot marks the first time that people will live there.

The Wainwright Building was constructed in 1926. It was the headquarters for the Seaboard Air Line Railway Corp., according to a history of the building posted on the Virginia Department of Historic Resources website.

It got its name when the Wainwright Realty Corp. bought the building in the 1930s.

Most recently it was a medical office.

Builders gutted the entire structure. The ceilings have seven inches of concrete between each floor. The units also feature double-walled construction.

"No one is sharing a common wall, which is so rare," said Raffaele Allen, the property's manager who works for Drucker and Falk, the property's management company.

The countertops are made of imported glacier-white granite. The backsplashes are linear glass tile. The floors are espresso-colored composite wood planks.

Each floor will have a decorated lobby at each elevator bank, and each floor has trash chutes. The building will also have on-site recycling.

Forty of the apartments have been leased and residents will begin moving in on Aug. 15. Some of the floors are still incomplete, and the property management is moving residents in by floor.

The entire project should be finished by the end of September.

The original plans called for the development of townhomes behind the building, but those plans were scrapped.



"We're going to look at the market and when we think the market is there, we'll do something," Gadams said. "I don't think the market is there right now."

The original plans also included a roof-top pool. Instead, the amenities will include concierge services, a roof-top dog park, a "sky lounge" that will include a kitchen for parties, an outdoor kitchen, a grilling area, a gym and a concert stage. nib