

Inside Business

The Hampton Roads Business Journal

Iconic building in downtown Norfolk set for its new role

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Courtesy of Marathon Development Group
Rendering of the second floor in the Icon Norfolk Apartments currently under redevelopment in the former Bank of America building in downtown.



Courtesy of Marathon Development Group
Exterior of the former Bank of America building in downtown Norfolk currently being transformed into Icon Norfolk Apartments.



Courtesy of Marathon Development Group
One of the kitchens that will be in the new Icon Norfolk Apartments.

Raffaele Allen felt the former Bank of America building at 1 Commercial Place in Norfolk needed a name that could live up to what it is and what it will become when it is transformed into luxury apartments.

Allen also knew everything within the revitalized building needed to be above and beyond what anyone has seen before.

That's why the name Icon was chosen for the \$90 million project. Residents are scheduled to begin arriving in November.

"The name Icon came from the building; it's so iconic we said what can we call it?" said Allen, director of assets for Buddy Gadams' Marathon Development Group. Marathon is redeveloping the 24-story building built in 1966. "It's an incredible location with out-of-this-world views."

One of the first high-rise buildings in downtown, the historic building features expansive views of the Elizabeth River and the city.

From a showroom directly across the street at 300 East Main St., Allen explained how future residents can see and touch every aspect of what the area's newest apartment community will have in store for them.

"It's hard for people to visualize in preconstruction," Allen said as he showed

two walls full of finishes, including the lobby tile, apartment floors, rooftop patio deck material and corridor carpets. Two kitchens, complete with appliances, pendant lights, quartz countertops and backsplashes, are on display in the showroom along with the full-size washer and dryer units.

A kiosk in the showroom features a touchscreen showing the 3-D view around the building that is featured at IconNorfolk.com.

“We knew views would be so important in this building and we wanted people to lease from this spot,” Allen said.

Tyler Brooks grew up in Virginia Beach and decided to make the move to downtown Norfolk because of the development activity, evolving landscape and changing vibe of the city.

After living in a condominium on Shore Drive for four years, Brooks will soon move into a 12-floor unit of Icon.

He was drawn to the building because he’ll be able to walk to his job at CBRE | Hampton Roads and many of the downtown hot spots that were previously only accessible to him by car.

“Working downtown for the past six years I have been able to witness the transformation of the city and look forward to see the flurry of activity that continues to land in downtown,” Brooks said.

Icon will feature more than 30,000 square feet of amenities, starting on the first floor with two restaurants and a retail area. Between the second floor and mezzanine levels, there will be a tanning salon, 24-hour fitness and wellness center, on-demand yoga studio, library nook, gaming parlor, sports lounge, dining room, sauna and hydro massage.

“What can make this iconic building stand up to the name Icon?” Allen said they asked themselves after exploring luxury apartments in New York, Miami, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta.

The original bank teller areas will become seating areas for the coffee bar and jazz lounge. Another teller area is being transformed into dueling chef kitchens – at the ready for resident-hosted competitions or for local chefs to compete. Another part of the lobby will house a gallery for local artists.

Former bank vaults will be temperature controlled and available for rental by residents. One vault will contain an 85-inch screen television.

“This is a historic building and we’re allowed to repurpose it, but we want to pay homage to it.” Allen said, noting they have to preserve the Travertine walls and other features within the 51-year-old building. Modernizations, however, include

double wall construction and eight-foot solid core doors.

The 269 apartments, which are named for iconic people from the sixties, include studios (Lennon and Taylor), one-bedroom units (Presley and Hepburn), two bedrooms (Kennedy and Hemingway) and three bedrooms (Monroe and Sinatra). Prices range from \$1,150 per month for a studio apartment up to \$4,600 per month for a three-bedroom unit.

The 20th (club level) and 21st (penthouse) floors have a private club with a kitchen, lounge and conference room.

The 15,000-square-foot rooftop area boasts a private clubroom and kitchen as well as a public clubhouse with a bar and kitchen available for rental. Also on the roof is a 30-foot-long relaxation pool, fire pits for the winter and misting fans for summer. It's enclosed by six-foot-tall glass walls to keep the view unobstructed.

“We tried to think of everything to make it unique, different and iconic,” Allen said. “We wanted it to be a place for people to really be at home.”