



Savoy Court

A Salute to Style; A Tribute to Technology

BY JESSICA WHITE

Savoy Court is musical in its conception and design – truly. The developer, Building Partnerships LLC, took the 1947 apartment building, originally built as multifamily housing for Bowling Air Force base after World War II, and in addition to gutting and renovating the systems, created a distinct identity for the building, based on the 1940s jazz record label, Savoy Records.

“I was eating a falafel on U Street and saw great jazz photos on the walls of the restaurant. When I asked about the photos, the owner of the restaurant said I should go to Sandra Trusdale Butler’s store on U Street. I did. She had great style and taste so she wound up selecting not only the oversize black and white jazz photos that adorn the hallways, she did all the interior furnishings, other than the furniture itself. She also selected the artist for the sculpture on the wall of the lobby, Alva Nelms,” says Ernie Marcus, a developer with almost 30 years of experience and a partner with Building Partnerships LLC.

The jazz theme permeates the buildings, in the way the floor was designed and in features still on order, like the interior unit address plaques,

which will be in the shape of piano keys. “The name, Savoy Court, and the interior styling really play off the jazz theme, which is appropriate considering the era of the building,” says Marcus.

Located in a quiet section of Congress Heights, the 62-unit building was bought by the tenants who then selected Building Partnerships LLC as the developer. “Several tenants will purchase units in the building. Eight units will be set aside for buyers who go through Manna’s home buyers program. They will essentially get the units at cost. The other units, priced from \$160,000 to the low and middle \$200s, are affordable to people earning 80 percent of the area median income. People earning around \$40,000 should be able to afford to purchase these units, plus first time home buyers should be able to qualify for DC HPAP (Home Purchase Assistance Program),” Marcus states.

“Forma Design, an architectural firm on U Street, convinced me that people would respond to superior, cutting edge design,” says Marcus. “We really raised the bar on that. There is not much east of the river that has this level of design.”

The kitchen was designed for a true cook, with maple pantry cabinets with roll-out shelves under a wide quartz

table/island. “We used the same drawer pulls that we used in Northwest and the same accent color,” says Marcus.

Every unit will also be wired for Internet and cable television, and a central satellite dish has been installed with a central hook-up in each unit. “We found that people use the second bedroom as an office, so in the one-bedroom units, we have a computer nook with a phone tied to the doors with a screen that allows people to see (the entranceways),” says Marcus.

Forma also created hallway features that establish a “design rhythm” as you walk down the hallway, and it used sophisticated and expensive lighting in the common areas.

“Since there are two entranceways, Forma needed to tie the building together, so they redesigned the façades around the entranceways to have two distinct design elements facing the courtyard, redesigned the lobbies, and built a pergola in the (secure and gated) courtyard between the lobbies where residents can socialize. We also spent \$40,000 on landscaping, which is more than I ever spent on a project before,” says Marcus, noting that not all the trees and plantings have arrived yet.

Building Partnerships LLC took every opportunity to enhance the growth of a sense of community

among its future residents. “In addition to the courtyard, we have a fabulous roof deck. From the roof deck, it feels like you are surrounded by trees and nature. And you have the river in front of you and can even watch planes landing and taking off at National. Plus, we have a fitness room with top of the line equipment... It is really amazing that we could do all this with a building that was not built with those goals in mind.” It is also a dog-friendly building, and anyone who lives in a dog-friendly area knows that it is hard not to be social and spiritually uplifted when greeting our canine companions.

With two nearby Metros, a bus stop in front of the building and convenience to downtown and shopping, Savoy Court will be music to the savvy buyer’s ears.

Savoy Court’s sales office is located at 210 Oakwood St., SE, Unit 103. For more information, call 202-561-3644, or visit www.savoycourt.com.

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