

From blighted to booming: Midtown becoming 'downtown neighborhood'

Three new multifamily housing projects are poised to start construction in the once-blighted, now booming Midtown district in Oklahoma City.

By **Steve Lackmeyer** *Published: November 12, 2013*



Midtown Renaissance Group is set to building a 43-unit apartment complex at 1201 N Francis - one of three such developments being planned in west side of the downtown neighborhood. **Brian Fitzsimmons**

The west end of Midtown, littered with blighted flop houses and abandoned buildings just a few years ago, is becoming a hot spot for new development with three new multifamily housing projects set to start construction next year.

Developer Gary Brooks and Indianapolis-based Milhaus Development announced plans last month to start construction in 2014 on a \$42.5 million, five-story complex at NW 10 and Shartel while Catholic Charities of Oklahoma announced plans to build a new headquarters nearby at NW 12 and Classen.

Midtown Renaissance Group, meanwhile, confirmed to *The Oklahoman* on Tuesday plans to build a 43-unit, four-story apartment building at 1201 N Francis Ave. Mode Development also confirmed construction is set to start on the Lisbon Lofts at NW 9 and Shartel. The complex will feature seven for-sale condominiums in a series of modern-style, three-story buildings.

The Midtown Renaissance complex represents the last undeveloped property owned by the developers, who have assembled dozens of properties throughout Midtown. The property at 1201 N Francis neighbors three other former flop houses renovated into 16 upscale apartments.

Fleming said the new project, which is also his team's first ground-up, new housing project, is designed by architect Brian Fitzsimmons. The four-story complex includes walk-ups, interior-gallery style corridors and covered parking.

Fleming said the project represents an end to the developers' work in the western half of Midtown — the same area where they began residential development several years ago.

“I think this provides some good momentum for what's going on in the greater Midtown area,” Fleming said. “It should add to the neighborhood and create a really good western border to Midtown.”

James Ellison, who is teaming up with developer Rod Baker, has sought to build for-sale housing on the St. Anthony Hospital-owned property at NW 9 and Shartel.