

THE JOURNAL RECORD SECTION B

• Local Feature
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ELEVATIONS

COMMONS ON CLASSEN

Downtown dreaming

BY MOLLY M. FLEMING
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OKLAHOMA CITY. — Senior citizens wanting to live in an affordable place near downtown could make that dream a reality in late 2016.

Neighborhood Housing Services and Belmont Development are building the 40,500-square-foot Commons on Classen independent-living facility for low- to moderate-income senior citizens. The three-story building will have 49 apartments — 36 one-bedroom units, nine two-bedroom units and four efficiency-style places. The \$4.2 million project is funded through an Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency tax-credit program. The building near NW 13th Street and Classen Drive was designed by architect Larry Blackledge, owner of *Blackledge and Associates* architecture firm. Susan Bolner-Hamilton served as the project manager and interior designer.

Neighborhood Housing Services Executive Director Roland Chupik said this type of housing is needed in Oklahoma City.

“As baby boomers continue to mature, the need is there, particularly for low- to moderate-income seniors,” Chupik said. “This is an amenity-rich facility. As far as aesthetically pleasing, this will stand the test of time over the years.”

The brick building is a triangle shape, with an open center courtyard. The brick is accented with exterior finish insulation, or EFI, which gives a stucco appearance. Metal balconies and awnings help complete the contemporary yet classic aesthetic.

The first floor has a lobby, office, lounge area and covered patio. All of the first-floor apartments are one-bedroom units. They will have access to the street through individual separate doors. The residents will be able to walk out into a small, fenced yard.



The three-story building will have 49 apartments. COURTESY RENDERINGS

The second floor has a fitness area and a lounge. All of the rooms have an outdoor walkway with views of the courtyard. The third floor has the same sort of outdoor corridors, a lounge and a covered balcony. The balcony is above the covered patio on the first floor. Some rooms also have individual balconies.

The rooms were designed with the elderly in mind, so there are no bathtubs, only walk-in showers. This helps prevent falls, Blackledge said. The rooms have alarm systems and fully equipped kitchens with Energy Star appliances.

Because of the amenities, finishes, land cost and project cost, unit leases could be market rate, but that won't be the case. A \$750,000 grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank will help reduce the loan needed to purchase the property. The rents are restricted to



guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

“It's really a wonderful partnership with one of the best federal programs still out there,” Chupik said.

The existing building is expected to

be demolished in April, with construction starting soon after the remnants are removed.

The project has a 12- to 14-month build time; therefore, it could be done by summer 2016.

\$4.2M
The cost of the project.



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executive director, Neighborhood Housing Services