



GRAND IDEA When completed, Church + State will add 158 apartments and 20,000 square feet of retail within Ohio City's Hingetown area.

Renaissance in Ohio City

LDA architects takes key role in renaissance of venerable Cleveland neighborhood

By Lou Kren | Images courtesy of LDA architects

Once a city in its own right, Ohio City today leads the way in rebranding the city of Cleveland as a vibrant location to live, work and play. The impetus: a strategic plan created six years ago that sought to revitalize the Ohio City neighborhood via new and renovated retail, commercial and residential space.

"Demand for 1,800 new residential units was projected in the plan and during the last three years more than 800 have been completed or are underway, totaling approximately \$200 million in new buildings and renovations to existing structures," says Tom McNair, executive director of Ohio City Inc., the area's community development corporation.

A factor causing this increased demand is what urban historians and scholars are terming "The Fifth Migration." Originally coined by Robert Fishman, a professor at the University of Michigan, the term refers to the repopulation of America's urban centers and cities and represents the next great migration in modern U.S. history.

In Cleveland and nationwide, the fifth migration is being driven primarily by the college-educated millennial

demographic. The city's success from the fifth migration depends on how neighborhoods prepare and plan for the growth of this population through activities such as housing development, access to public transit, and green space.

Local architect all-in on Ohio City

The players in Ohio City's preparation for the fifth migration and transformation are many. One of the main contributors is LDA architects, led by founder and president Dominick Durante Jr. with 20 associates operating from The Offices at the Agora on Euclid Avenue in Cleveland's Midtown Corridor.

Founded in 1995 and initially focusing on redevelopment projects in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County as well as affordable housing projects across the state, the firm is involved in a host of current

market-rate residential and mixed-use projects on Cleveland's near West Side and across Northeast Ohio.

"We've gravitated toward market-rate housing and historic preservation, as, after the financial crisis, investment has increased for these types of projects in our area," Durante Jr. explains. This investment is largely driven by demand caused by positive migration patterns of college-educated millennials into the city post-recession. From 2011-2013, Cleveland was tied eighth in the U.S. with Seattle for this migration demographic.

Counting recent completions and those in various stages of design and construction, LDA has had a major hand in over a dozen Ohio City projects totaling more than 500,000 square feet and \$75 million in construction value. These projects represent more than 330 residential units.

GAINING BALANCE Clinton West's courtyard design (top) breaks down the building's scale. Interior renderings display the building's cleaner, modern interiors (middle, bottom), complementing the more traditional exterior design.

Even with such volume, each project reflects its surroundings and the unique wants and needs of developers.

"Specific to the Ohio City projects, even though we have a lot of projects in one area, they reflect the owners' visions," says Steven Jennings, LDA architects' associate principal. "As a result, the projects are individual and contextual."

While residential-street projects often remain respectful to the traditional aesthetics of the neighborhood, projects on Detroit enable an abundance of design creativity. "On Detroit Avenue, we are freer to create more progressive contemporary designs," Durante Jr. says. "For example, on Detroit, buildings can be taller. Consider one of our design projects, Church + State. That design is almost avant-garde. On Detroit, the city is encouraging higher-density development and forward-looking projects."

These design decisions stem partly from the demographic shift in our city. A recent study commissioned by the Cleveland Foundation found that in Northeast Ohio, 16% of the region's college-educated population lives in the city. In Cleveland, this means that roughly 23.7% of the population is ages 18-35.

Here's a look at five of the firm's key current projects in the area:

Clinton West

*New, 67 one- and two-bedroom
apartments, 98,000 square feet
www.clintonwestcle.com*

LOCATION: 3007 Clinton Ave.

DEVELOPER: Geis-Kertesz

COMPLETION: Summer 2017

In a residential area south of Detroit Road, Clinton West seeks to mesh with its neighbors via a "traditional, neighborhood-apartment look to maintain the historic fabric of the local landscape," says Durante Jr. That it does, with two four-story masonry walkup building wings flanking a central courtyard.

"From Clinton, the two buildings, with stepped-back fourth-floor penthouses and the courtyard, break down the project's scale and blend with the adjoining resi-





FRESH PERSPECTIVE Edge 32's angled layout along Detroit Road opens the view to both downtown and Lake Erie. The rear portion of the building scales down toward the neighborhood.

dential mansions," Durante Jr. says. "Also, steps and porches in the front give a residential character to the development, looking almost like brownstones."

Though size is not apparent given the efforts to blend the project to its surroundings, Clinton West offers 70 one- and two-bedroom apartment units, with individual entrances from interior corridors and also from the outside. Though traditional on the exterior, interiors are contemporary, with wood-veneer flooring, quartz countertops and, in general, clean lines. High ceilings – nine feet with 10-foot ceilings in penthouse popups – make room for eight-foot-high windows. The high ceilings and large windows are staples of LDA architects' recent Ohio City projects. All Clinton West units also feature open floor plans and balconies.

Community spaces allow residents to congregate and mingle, with common patio space and grills to the rear of the site. And, because parking is situated under and behind the building, parking spaces and vehicles are out of view.

Edge 32

New, 60 one- and two-bedroom apartments, 77,000 square feet
livingonedge32.com

LOCATION: 3219 Detroit Ave.

DEVELOPER: Vintage Development Group

COMPLETION: Summer 2017, model unit now open

In contrast to Clinton West, Edge 32 fronts on Detroit Avenue, allowing for freedom to provide contemporary

designs that younger generations seek when making housing choices. 'Contemporary' aptly describes Edge 32. Twin six-story masonry- and concrete-plank wings, topped by penthouse units, define the front of the building, which steps down to a three-story wood-frame structure in the rear to blend with its off-Detroit neighborhood.

Slightly angled to allow a viewing corridor along Detroit to Public Square and better views from balconies, the footprint enables parking along West 32nd Street

"[Clinton West seeks to mesh with its neighbors via a] traditional, neighborhood-apartment look to maintain the historic fabric of the local landscape."

Dominick Durante Jr.

LDA architects

(and underneath the building), essentially hiding vehicles from view.

First-floor retail space extends along Detroit, and the building's angle enables more street-level room for storefront patios, accommodating the market's desire for walkable, pedestrian-friendly environments. Again, high ceilings are the norm, with 10-foot ceilings at the front of the building and penthouses featuring dramatic sloped ceilings, offering unobstructed views of Lake Erie.

Due to concrete-plank construction in Detroit-facing units, interior ductwork remains exposed, with ductwork in units to the south hidden in the wood framing.

Church + State Apartments

New, 158 studio and one-, two- and three-bedroom units, plus 20,000 square feet of retail

LOCATION: Detroit Avenue between West 28th and West 29th streets

DEVELOPER: Hemingway Development, Grammar and Brent Zimmerman

COMPLETION: Summer 2019

On the former site of parking lots, the under-construction Church + State Apartments owes its unique name to the fact that the site is bordered by Church Street to the south and West 29th Street, which formerly was State Street. Here, two buildings are separated by a wide pedestrian walkway bisecting the site diagonally between Detroit and Church.

Besides entrance lobbies to each slate and metal clad building, the walkway, which Durante Jr. describes as the heart of the development, will feature an amphitheater, splash park and ground-floor retail. Design elements like these appeal to a broad range of income levels and age groups, creating a diverse community. Ranging from studio to three-bedroom floor plans, the units provide flexibility not only in size and layout, but in selection of finishes, yielding a variety of floor plans and price points.

To the west, the taller building, at 11 stories, offers unobstructed views to



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WELCOME ADDITION Church + State (above) will feature two buildings with a walkway between containing shops and pedestrian-friendly elements. Additionally, residents will be able to take advantage of city and lake views on the public rooftop space.



NEW VIEWS The Ohio City Post Office (above) was renovated to restore its historic character, while new elements, such as a glass elevator, modernize the interior.

Ohio City Post Office photos by Inside the Eye Photography



COMFORTABLE FIT The Vine is a nine-unit luxury townhome community that will fit within the neighborhood fabric of Ohio City.

Lake Erie and, over its companion six-story structure, has sightlines to Public Square and downtown Cleveland. This building will provide first-floor retail topped by parking levels with apartment units located above. The project will offer over 200 parking spaces, with the upper level parking wrapped in a custom mural on semi-transparent material that reflects the artistic culture of the neighborhood.

Most of the units at Church + State will offer recessed balconies, and the combination of metal clad projections and slate offers color contrast while breaking up perceived building mass. And, as the slate has a unique texture and sheen, the façade will be ever-changing. Also featured: an illuminated seesaw.

An events center, available to residents and non-residents, will top the six-story building, as will patio space and a pool.

Ohio City Post Office

Historic redevelopment, 8 units plus retail, 22,000 square feet

LOCATION: 2515 Jay Ave.

DEVELOPER: TEG Properties

COMPLETION: 2015

An award-winning historic-preservation project, this three-story

building housed the original Ohio City Post Office – and a hotel above – back when Ohio City existed separately from Cleveland. Ultimately gutted, then falling into disrepair, the building now has been completely transformed, with street-level frontage returned to its original multi-color palette. The building now boasts eight

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apartments with each unit featuring unique materials, fixtures and finishes, and a new rooftop deck located in the rear of the building. The former post office lobby has been reinvented as a motorcycle showroom for Ohio City Moto and retail space for Whiskey Grade, a fuel inspired apparel store. Perplexity Games appropriately found a spot in the lower level to host escape room games.

A glass-enclosed elevator with wrap-around stairs has been added to improve vertical access. Located in what had been one of the building’s exterior light wells, the old exterior brick now serves as interior walls, adding to the building’s unique material mix.

The Vine

New, 9 townhomes, 24,848 square feet

LOCATION: 3110 Vine Court

DEVELOPER: My Place Homes / Activity Capital

COMPLETION: 2018

Unique among the projects listed here, The Vine features construction of nine market-rate for-sale townhome units. Construction of the luxury units is just underway, with two units having been pre-sold. Residents of these units will be rewarded with high-end finishes and rooftop decks that offer views of Lake Erie.

As with so many other local design, development and construction entities, LDA architects continues to help reshape the historic Ohio City neighborhood. Attention to design details that blend projects with surrounding residential neighborhoods while reinventing Detroit Avenue with bold, contemporary projects, LDA architects is preparing for and accommodating America’s next great migration. **P**