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COVER STORY **NEWS + FEATURES** | September 24, 2019

Under Construction

Edwin Slipek

Residential expansion and redevelopment are ubiquitous in Richmond as building cranes punctuate the airspace over downtown and neighborhoods to the east, west, north and south.

On the Virginia Commonwealth University medical campus in Court End, ambitious new facilities are coming forth dramatically. Meanwhile, municipal officials, city council, potential developers and residents can't find common ground on a lofty scheme to replace the Coliseum and pump life into the long moribund Navy Hill district.

The following subjective survey of just 19 major construction and newly completed projects in various neighborhoods is just a

sampling of much greater activity in the city.

Does this energetic level of activity suggest that City Hall should step back and allow free enterprise and institutional forces be allowed to take the lead on reinvigorating our city?



Downtown

The VCU Medical Building at 11th and Leigh

While officials, investors and residents gnash their teeth over the proposed Navy Hill redo of the Coliseum and its environs downtown, directly across the street from the sprawling redevelopment area, Virginia Commonwealth University is charging ahead with two ambitious buildings now under construction. At 16 floors, 603,000 square feet plus a 472,000-square-foot parking garage, the outpatient facility at East Leigh and 11th streets is budgeted at \$349 million. It is the most expensive building project in the VCU health system's history. It will consolidate many outpatient programs and embrace the programs of the institution's Massey Cancer Center, which will have a designated entrance and elevators. HDR Inc. is the architect for what should become one of the medical campus' signature buildings.

The VCU Children's Hospital

The creation of a stand-alone children's hospital has been one of the most contentious sagas in recent local medical and civic discussions, but construction is underway for a 16-story, 500,000-square-foot, \$350-million outpatient children's facility at the VCU Medical Center. The half-block site is East Marshall and 11th streets on the site of the former Richmond Eye, Ear and Nose Hospital. HDR Inc. is the architect for the 86-bed facility that will be joined to the Children's Pavilion in the same block.

On the VCU Monroe Park campus, the new Engineering Research Building, at Belvidere and West Cary streets, a 133,000-square-foot and \$93-million endeavor, is taking form.

The Virginia General Assembly Building

If the new housing developments around town are generic and cubist, one of the nation's most acclaimed architects is leading the design team for the new Virginia General Assembly Building that should soon rise from the deep trough now in the block bounded by West Broad, Ninth and 10th streets and Capitol Square. Robert A. M. Stern Architects of New York is taking the lead with Glave & Holmes of Richmond as associate architect. Embedded in the massive, 15-story, 426,000-square-foot-project is the classical revival facade of the 1912 former Life of Virginia building that faces the Capitol. A tunnel will connect the new structure with a parking deck to be built across Ninth Street on the west (its cost, along with the restoration of Old City Hall, are included in the \$300 million budget). Despite its price tag, the building will resemble a stately, 1930s-era art deco building more than the Taj Mahal.

Virginia War Memorial

The exquisitely sited Virginia War Memorial on Oregon Hill, which honors the dead of World War II, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, is being expanded. A new, architecturally compatible wing to the east, with an expanded wall of memory, will memorialize warriors in the ongoing Global War on Terror. SMBW of Richmond is the architect for the 26,500-square-foot, \$26-million project. In addition to educational spaces and a lecture hall on the upper levels, the expansion there will add parking spaces, many under roof.

[image-6]

The Locks Tower

The Locks, a six-acre neighborhood along the Haxall Canal and the James River and Kanawha Canal, has transformed the former Reynolds Aluminum complex into a crazy-quilt, but attractive mesh of old and new buildings. The restorations and infill are well-done. It looks like the area has always been an inviting place for a waterside meal, or to repair to one's own apartment for the evening. With four historic brick buildings repurposed, however, the Locks has now gone vertical with the Locks Tower. This stark-looking high-rise, shrouded in precast concrete panels, contains 237 apartments; the 11th floor boasts a pool, adding another rooftop aquatic amenity to downtown. WVS Cos., Tom Papa and PRG Real Estate of Philadelphia are the developers, with Walter Parks Architects designing the \$58-million project.

Church Hill, Shockoe Bottom

[image-7]

The Culinary Institute at Reynolds

In April, the widely anticipated Market at 25th, a neighborhood grocery store, opened on North 25th Street at Nine Mile Road. It is a key ingredient in an innovative recipe for providing healthier food choices for North Church Hill residents while expanding the reach of the excellent culinary program at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. In addition to accommodating some 750 students, up from the current enrollment of 300, that Richmond is gaining an architecturally aggressive building in the process is icing on the cake. The four-story, skeletal, 20,000-square-foot culinary building will house teaching kitchens, a greenhouse and a demonstration kitchen in addition to a restaurant and 12 apartments. Local visionary philanthropists Steve and Kathie Markel are the guiding forces and benefactors of this innovative project designed to serve an economically challenged neighborhood. Its architect is O'Neill McVoy Architects of New York. It was part of the design team for the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU, for which the Markels and Markel Insurance were prime movers.

[image-8]

Main 2525

The entire, sloping north side of the 2500 block of East Main is getting a new \$34-million building that reflects the scale of a Tobacco Row structure but will house 216 apartments, 7,400-square-feet of commercial space and covered parking for 241 vehicles. The six-story building at 2525 E. Main St., with mostly one-bedroom units, will feature a swimming pool, rooftop terrace and lounge and indoor bicycle storage. Another amenity is the building's proximity to Millie's Diner, one of the city's iconic restaurants. Developers are Charles Macfarlane and Sam McDonald. Walter Parks Architects is the designer.

Jackson Ward

[image-9]

The Penny at Jackson Ward

"Let us take our nickels and turn them into dollars," said African-American civic leader Maggie L. Walker in 1901 as the Jim Crow era was strangling black opportunities in business and commerce. Soon thereafter, Walker founded the Penny Savings Bank in Jackson Ward. It's the spirit and wisdom of that Richmonder that the name of the Penny, an apartment complex, salutes. The looming, 166-unit building with in-building parking, a pool and street front commercial space was developed by SNP Properties. The designer is Walter Parks Architects.

[image-10]

Jackson Place

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, the nation's first church of that faith to be built for a black congregation, once stood at Jackson and North First streets and was demolished in the 1960s. Nearing completion on that site is a \$34 million apartment complex that will contain 154 units, 72 of which will be rented to former residents of nearby Frederick Fay Towers. This senior residential facility in the Gilpin Court housing project is being vacated. The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the nonprofit Community Preservation and Development Corp. of Silver Spring, Maryland, are among the developers. Grimm and Partners of Maryland is the architect. A building that housed a former Franciscan convent, and a savaged church bell from St. Joseph's, are being incorporated in the design of Jackson Place.

Manchester

[image-11]

South Falls I

The south bank of the James River near the Mayo Bridge in Manchester is one of the most ancient sites in town. In the 18th century it was public commons where livestock roamed and grazed. Later, a large paper mill was operated here. Now, footings for a 14-story high-rise apartment tower are being poured for what may become a visual gateway to this fast-developing part of town. Phase one of South Falls, at 111 Hull St. will contain 256 residential units.

There will also be 2,400 square feet of ground level commercial space and 279 parking spaces. The \$100 million development, built tight between the James River flood wall and the Manchester Canal, is being led by veteran Richmond developers Tom Papa, Richard Souter and Jason Vickers. The designer is Walter Parks Architects.

[image-12]

The Current

The once-industrial section of Manchester should be getting two signature buildings with the Current, a 260,000-square-foot complex for which ground has been broken at 400 Hull St., next to the Plant Zero arts center. The respective apartment and office structures, each with five floors, are being designed by the Hicok Cole, a top-drawer Washington architecture firm with a Richmond office. There will be 200 apartments in one building and the office structure will have 50,000 square feet. The buildings will be linked by a parking garage with some 300 spaces. A restaurant and green space are slated for the ground level. Utility lines are being run underground to enhance the aesthetics. Lynx Ventures is the developer.

[image-13]

City View Landing

One of the city's most architecturally attractive new mixed-use complexes is taking form near 521 Hull St. The 161-unit development includes a mix of townhouses and midrise buildings.

The combination of handsome brownish brick, well-selected metal finishes, and dramatic cantilevered flat roofs create a sense of welcome. The developer of the \$30 million project is Thalhimer's Realty Partners, and the architect is 3North, a Richmond firm. There will also be 13,270 square feet of commercial space here. These new buildings are part of a much larger redevelopment on the 18 acres where the Reynolds Metals South plant once operated. In addition to old warehouses already repurposed for City View Landing, an office tower and grocery store may be future attractions here.

[image-14]

Riverview

The tracts near 1401 Railroad Ave. in Manchester. have a long history having housed rail yards with tracks under the intersection of Cowardin and Semmes avenues and leading south. The property was acquired by the late trucking tycoon Harwood Cochrane, who amassed this and nearby properties. These he gave to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. In 2006 the museum sold this parcel near the Lee Bridge to developers. Now, Alabama-based LIV Development is prepping 7.3 acres for 289 residences. It will offer a number of five-story apartment buildings with parking on lower levels, townhouses and panoramic views of Oregon Hill and downtown.

Forest Hill

[image-15]

On Forest Hill Avenue

A three-story, mixed-use complex with some 38 apartments has been framed in the 4900 block of Forest Hill Avenue, just west of Westover Hills Boulevard. There will also be 12,000 square feet of commercial space. Veil Brewery, which currently has a larger Scott's Addition location, Charm School ice cream, and Blanchards Coffee Roasting Co. have signed on as tenants. High Summit Partners is the developer and Fultz and Singh is the architect for what should make this suburban stretch and more pedestrian-appealing destination.

Scott's Addition

[image-16]

The Summit at Scott's Addition

Sadly, a handsome, half-century old, colonial revival-inflected SunTrust branch bank that could have been repurposed, was demolished on the site at Broad Street for the Summit at Scott's Addition. A hulking, 166-apartment building will soon be rising at 3022 W. Broad St. There will be the requisite structured parking, swimming pool and a smattering of retail at street level. SNP Properties of Richmond is developing the Walter Park Architects-designed, seven-story building.

[image-17]

Scott's View

The remarkable residential growth in Scott's Addition leaps forward with the 364-apartment Scott's View complex at 1400 Roseneath Road. There are 450 parking spaces that will also serve commercial spaces in the \$75-million development. The developer and architect of the brick structure is Historic Housing, a company that has overseen significant adaptive reuse and ground-up residential developments in Shockoe Bottom. Promotional material for Scott's View includes a panoramic color photograph of the Scott's Addition cityscape with fireworks exploding over the Diamond — an apt and upbeat image for another transformative project in this former, mid-20th century industrial and warehouse district.

Oregon Hill

[image-18]

805 W. Cary St.

A valuable and substantial chunk of historic Oregon Hill fabric was sacrificed for 805 W. Cary, a just completed, four-floor, 100-unit apartment building. J.D. Lewis Construction Management and Larry Cluff are the developers. Architecture Design Office designed the \$18.5-million project that is adjacent to the VCU Monroe Park campus. Four evocative, 19th century brick structures, including the Paragon Pharmacy building, all in good condition, were sacrificed for this architecturally underwhelming housing block. Instead of listing the apartment complex's amenities, let's consider the irreplaceable

structures that were lost.

Sherwood Park

[image-19]

The Canopy at Ginter Park

Despite its verdant name, few developments in recent years have caused as much community opposition as the Canopy at Ginter Park at 1311 Westwood Ave. Nearing completion, the 301-apartment development, which neighbors fought rigorously for the incompatibility of its scale, intensity and generic design, is situated on a leafy, 15-acre tract on the Union Presbyterian Seminary campus in the 3200 block of Brook Road. The seminary worked with Tennessee-based Bristol Development Group on the project, which is intended to both provide housing for its students and generate income from rentals to the public.

The Fan District

[image-20]

The Circ

Richmond has a glorious inventory of spectacular but aging churches, many with active and loyal congregations. Increasingly however, the challenge of maintaining the physical plants is tough. Wisely, St. John's United Church of Christ, one of Richmond most

beautiful complexes, sold an adjacent surface parking lot for residential development. Forty spaces in the new complex's parking garage will be devoted to church use. The five-story, \$14.5-million Circ (short for Stuart Circle, nearby), at 1137 W. Grace St. on the prominent corner of West Grace and Lombardy streets, will have 106 units. The first two levels serve as a parking garage.

Fountainhead and WVS Cos. are the developers. Walter Parks Architects is the designer of the mostly red-brick building that should blend in with its century-old apartments that occupy much of the block, the former University of Richmond campus.
