

Real Estate

You've heard of tiny homes. This East Dallas project will rent 'micro' apartments

Steve Brown

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Builders are thinking small with their plans for an Old East Dallas apartment community.

The Bloc House rental project is planned near Carroll and Columbia avenues, east of Deep Ellum.

Apartments in the 72-unit property will range from near 350 square feet for the smallest units to less than 800 square feet for the largest apartments, according to details the builders provided to the Dallas Plan Commission.

Zoning was approved for the two and three-story project at 4615 Willow Street earlier this year. The almost 1.3-acre development site is now a vacant lot.

Builders Alex Lowe and Jon Hetzel bought the land earlier this month. The developers told city planners that reducing the unit size would bring down apartment rents.

Ridge Pointe Commercial Estate worked on the sale, an assembly of nine properties on the block.

Plans for the community show apartments surrounding a courtyard, with a swimming pool and clubhouse. Dallas' Kollaja Architecture designed the development.

The builders are still working out the pricing and just how large the units will be.

"At this stage, we are going through the design and pricing pre-development process so some of those requested details like exact unit size and estimated rent are still a bit in flux," Hertznel said in an email. "Our target studio unit size is around 350 square feet."

The apartment site is adjacent to the Santa Fe Trail, which runs from Deep Ellum to White Rock Lake.

More than half of the apartments in the Bloc House would be smaller one-bedroom units, according to previously published plans.

So-called "micro-units" usually are between 200 and 400 square feet. The small rental homes are gaining popularity in urban areas where high apartment rents are making it harder for residents to afford housing.

Dallas hasn't seen rental projects planned with a large number of small apartments. But several developments in the works for the downtown area would include a number of these units.

The average new apartment being built in North Texas is about 880 square feet, according to Richardson-based RealPage.

"Small micro-units were always a lot more buzz than reality – not just in Dallas, but all across the country," said Jay Parsons, chief economist with RealPage. "They're more common in densely pocketed Asian cities.

"But at the right scale, it could be an interesting option for those who'd like to live in a newer building in a premium location but at a lower rent."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/business/real-estate/2023/06/14/youve-heard-of-tiny-homes-this-east-dallas-project-will-rent-micro-apartments/>