

For rent: Rooms with a view

Walker Terrace takes shape on Congress Street

By Kate Bucklin

PORTLAND — For only the third time in 18 years, a new apartment building is under construction in the city.

Walker Terrace occupies Congress Street from Walker Street to Carleton Street. The building includes 40 apartments, with 22 earmarked for lower income renters. The five-story building with a mezzanine is being constructed on the site of a former gas station and stands out on a stretch of Congress Street where gas stations are still prominent.

Developer Nathan Szanton is hoping the one- and two-bedroom apartments will attract members of the local workforce, including teachers, nurses and construction workers. He said single parents or young singles looking for housing with a roommate may also find the two-bedroom units a good fit.

As construction crews worked to install utilities on the fifth floor last week, Szanton explained unique features of the building. The apartments vary in layout and views: some include French balconies, others have lofts, spiral staircases and decks. Units on the corner of Congress and Walker streets include a "turret bedroom."

Szanton also said it is the first apartment building in Maine to be designated a "green" building, meaning environmentally responsible features were included in its design. For example, the hallway

• **FYI:** For more information about Walker Terrace or for a rental application, call Karen Walker at Dirigo Management, 871-1080. Floor plans and layouts of available apartments are also online at www.dirigomgmt.com.

lights will be on sensors so that when no one is in the hallway, 75 percent of the lights will turn off automatically. Two bicycle storage rooms on the ground floor are intended to encourage alternative transportation.

Views from some of the apartments include Back Cove and even the White Mountains.

The apartments on the fifth floor have lofts and open floor plans. As expected, the higher you go in the building, the higher the rents.

Monthly rent for a two-bedroom unit with a cathedral ceiling living room, a "turret" deck accessible from either the living room or master suite and a bonus loft room is expected to be around \$1,600. That includes parking, trash collection and all utilities except electricity.

On the more affordable end, a two-bedroom apartment with a French balcony in the living room and a master bedroom suite would cost about \$870 per month for qualified renters. All of the two-bedroom apartments have two



Diane Hudson photo

Developer Nathan Szanton's Walker Terrace is only Portland's third new apartment building in 18 years and the first in the state to be built to "green" specifications.

full bathrooms.

To qualify for workforce housing, an individual would have to earn less than \$30,000 a year. The formula changes when more than one adult occupant is involved.

Szanton and business partner Robert Monks Jr. of Cape Elizabeth hope to have the nearly \$5 million project ready for occupancy by October. The two developed a similar project, Casco Terrace on State Street, a couple years ago.

Fifty percent of the units in that building are designated affordable and it is fully rented.

Casco Terrace and Walker Terrace are two of the three apartment buildings built in Portland since 1988. The other development was Island View on Munjoy Hill. Szanton said there's a simple reason there isn't more apartment building activity.

"It's hard to make the numbers work and do a project like this," he said.

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