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Hospital demolition to make way for luxury apartments on South Charles Street

Emily Bregel - Reporter
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Demolition is underway at the site of the shuttered University of Maryland Specialty Hospital in Otterbein near the Inner Harbor. The site is set to become a luxury apartment complex.

Orlando, Fla.-based developer ZOM is leading the development of the six-story Banner Hill Apartments, which will add 349 apartments and a 331-space underground parking garage at 601 S. Charles St.

Pre-demolition activities have begun, said Andy Cretal, senior vice president for ZOM Mid-Atlantic. The actual takedown of the former hospital will begin in October and should last about two months. Once the demolition is done, the construction phase will last at least two years, Cretal said.



TORTI GALLAS AND PARTNERS INC.

The west facade of the planned 349-unit luxury apartment project at 601 S. Charles St., site of the shuttered University of Maryland Specialty Hospital.



The resident lounge and entertainment area of Banner Hill Apartments.



The "e-lounge" area of Banner Hill Apartments.

The units will range from 528 to 1,325 square feet, with an average of 814 square feet and average rent will be \$2,140. Pre-leasing is expected to begin in early 2017 and the first move-ins should take place around mid-2017. Project completion is slated for early 2018, Cretal said.

The project is ZOM's entry point into the Baltimore housing market. Cretal said the location on historic Charles Street is ideal, close to Camden Yards, M&T Bank Stadium and the MARC train, as well as the city's central business district.

"We want people to live in walkable communities where they can easily get to work and weekend activities. This site we think fits the bill very very well," he said. "It's very connected to all of the great parts of the city of Baltimore."

A first-floor e-lounge, with Wi-Fi and computer stations near a cafe; fitness center; and sports simulator are meant to foster interaction between residents. So are the resort-style infinity pool and lush courtyard on the south end of the site, Cretal said. Apartment units include island kitchens, granite slab countertops in both the kitchen and bathroom, stand-up showers, walk-in closets and private balconies.

The project schematic design got approval from the city's Urban Design and Architecture Review Panel in July 2014.

ZOM finalized its acquisition of the 2.2-acre site on Friday, buying it from a subsidiary of the Abell Foundation, said Cretal, who would not comment on the sale price. The Abell Foundation acquired the property for \$7.5 million with plans to build a charter school there, but backed down because of neighborhood opposition.