

REAL ESTATE FOCUS

Apartments Deliver Luxury at Former Post Office

The Clarendon will put 335 units on narrow parcel next to 101 in Woodland Hills.

By MICHAEL AUSHENKER Staff Reporter

A local developer has found a way to pack apartments on a narrow strip on land by the 101 freeway that once sorted packages for the U.S. Postal Service.

Located a block northwest of Topanga Canyon and Ventura boulevards, in the crook of the 101 freeway, the Clarendon apartments will stand at the former location of Woodland Hills Post Office, which closed May 2017 and has since moved to a location in the Promenade shopping center.

Now under construction, the Clarendon has seen its completion date, originally set for late 2019, pushed into early 2020.

“Almost every project we’ve had this year has had significant rain delay,” architect R.C. Alley of Architects Orange, which designed the luxury units, told the Business Journal.

On Aug. 31, 2017, Amcal Equities, a division of Amcal Multi-Housing Inc. in Agoura Hills, and Santa Monica’s Gortikov Enterprises Inc. announced that construction had begun on their Warner Center residential complex joint venture at 22055 to 22121 Clarendon St.

When completed, the Clarendon will have five stories with 335 apartments, from studios



PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE



Tenant Friendly: Left, double-pane windows and air filters address proximity to freeway; right, street-view rendering of project.

to three-bedrooms, and 26 units devoted to Section 8 tenants. The complex will feature a six-tier parking garage for roughly 564 vehicles and 370 bicycles, and more than an acre of outdoor amenities, including pool and spa, barbecue, half-basketball court and a 3,700-square-foot dog area.

Funding the project: a \$65.7 million construction loan from JPMorgan Chase and \$17 million in private equity from Essex Property Trust.

Given the metrics involved in creating luxury product abutted by a major roadway, Architects Orange team Alley, Ed Cadavona and Michael Heinrich tried to minimize the impact

while maximizing the land use.

“We certainly had the challenge of how to address the freeway edge,” Alley said.

The answer was to use “the building as a buffer,” Alley said, putting distance between the units and the freeway with the parking structure while having fingers of building with courtyards facing Clarendon Street.

“The building is less massive as we get to Clarendon (Street),” Alley said. “It’s very usable and user friendly.”

Taking this design approach, the architects milked “a significant amount of open space on the western side of the property,” Alley said. The units are “well-pocketed and well-protected.”

Units facing the freeway will have double-pane windows and air filters. Also, “we have no balconies because we thought it was not appropriate to have them facing the freeway,” Alley said.

A filtration system will pull air from the roof instead of the freeway side.

When the Clarendon went through the local approval process before Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council, residents had expressed concerns over traffic congestion. Amcal’s response, in the form of a commissioned traffic study, determined that the complex would generate much less traffic than the pre-existing post office.

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