

Former YWCA housing upgraded for senior living

Monthly rents range from \$613 to \$778

By SHARON LINSTEDT
NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

A former YWCA women's residence in Buffalo is now home to local seniors.

E Square Capital has completed its conversion of the stately, circa-1926 complex to 63 studio and one- and two-bedroom apartments for seniors. E Square, whose residential portfolio includes the Holling Press Apartments in downtown Buffalo and is doing another senior housing project at 937 Broadway, began welcoming tenants at the former "Y" this month.

Empty since 2005, the five-story, 100,000-square-foot structure, with its distinctive brick and pillared facade, began life as a women-only residence for short-term local tenants and visitors. Located at 245 North St., the Georgian-style building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was most recently used by the New York State Health Department to house women with mental health problems.

E Square President Eran Epstein said his \$9 million project returns the historic site to productive use.

"We are proud that this residential development fits so well as part of Buffalo historic Allentown District," Epstein said.

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Mark Mulville/Buffalo News

Empty since 2005, the former YWCA building at 245 North St. is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Broadway project slated for spring finish

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Monthly rents range from \$613 for a studio to \$778 for a two-bedroom apartment, including heat and on-site parking. Residents are responsible for their own electric bills.

The apartments are available to people age 55 and older, whose households earn less than \$36,540, which is 60 percent of the region's median income of \$60,900.

Epstein, partnering with Long Island-based investor Chris Gerhart, purchased the "Y" building in October 2005

for \$700,000. While they briefly put it up for sale with a \$2.2 million asking price, they returned to their original plan to convert the building to apartments.

As part of the conversion, all the units were updated with new bathrooms and kitchens, along with building-wide upgrades to plumbing and electrical system, and installation of a second elevator.

Extensive restoration work was done on French doors, oak and terrazzo floors and other original architectural elements in the structure's common

areas.

"Every opportunity was taken to preserve and enhance the quality of original exterior and interior features," Epstein said.

Buffalo's Silvestri Architects designed the "Y" apartment blueprint, and the project received additional funding through the National Parks Service, New York State Housing Finance Agency and the New York State Historic Preservation Office.

E Square is continuing conversion of former factory at 937 Broadway to 43 senior apartments. The project is slated for

completion next spring.

The developer is also renovating a former retail warehouse at 504 Washington St. in downtown Buffalo to three townhouses. The 3,500-square-foot residences are designed with integrated interior parking and 1,500-square-foot rear rental units.

E Square owns and manages more than 250 apartments in Western New York and Brooklyn, as well as 350,000 square feet of commercial space.

e-mail: slinstedt@buffnews.com