

# University Height's largest ever apartment complex set to open



The new BLVD apartment complex in North Park will offer one- and two-bedroom apartments for rent. (Nelvin C. Cepeda/The San Diego Union-Tribune)

The BLVD North Park project aims to attract young professionals with a brew pub and hangout areas. It is part of a trend of growing density in the area

By [PHILLIP MOLNAR](#) OCT. 24, 2019 | 5 AM

The North Park area is already one of San Diego's most heavily populated neighborhoods, and now it is going vertical.

The latest offering, the 165-unit BLVD North Park, is one of several dense projects reshaping the neighborhood. There are plans for bigger complexes in the works, but as it stands now, the BLVD project is the largest apartment

complex in North Park or University Heights.

Developer HG Fenton is hoping the project will appeal to hip, young professionals who like IPAs, art and want to live in a cool neighborhood. Rents are higher than one might be used to in North Park — starting at \$1,825 for a one-bedroom and \$2,650 for a two-bedroom. The most expensive is a two-bedroom penthouse for \$4,500 a month.

The average asking rent in North Park is \$1,384 a month, said real estate tracker CoStar, and \$1,280 a month in University Heights. The average rent at BLVD, including all unit sizes, is \$2,365 a month, CoStar said.

The seven-story project will be completed in late November and is already 25 percent leased. Despite the name of the building, community maps put it in University Heights, a few blocks away from North Park (although, it is in the city's North Park planning area).

HG Fenton has [recently built](#) several high-profile, luxury apartment buildings in Little Italy, but is betting University Heights is also a section of the city people will pay a premium to live in — despite being one of the city's slightly cheaper areas for renters.

Olivia Connolly, community business leader for HG Fenton, said it did focus groups in North Park and found renters who wanted to stay living in the area and were willing to pay for something nicer.

“What they want is something higher level,” she said during a recent tour of the property.

The first floor will be a roughly 3,000-square-foot restaurant and brewpub. HG Fenton said they found out from focus groups that people cared about the the brew pub more than a pool. It will be the newest SD TapRoom, which has a location in Pacific Beach.

Keeping with a beer theme, different floor plans in BLVD are named Pilsner (one bedroom), IPA (one bedroom with a loft), Lager (one bedroom) and Stout (two bedroom).

Other amenities include a dog run on the seventh floor, Nest thermostats, washer and dryer in each unit, two community outdoor patios with barbecue pits and one parking spot per bedroom — a necessity in the area where parking spots are extremely difficult to come by.

The focal point of the complex is a resident lounge on the third floor above the brew pub. It has a hot tub, grills, counter tops, a large TV and a small pool with knee-high water. Residents can enter the lounge from the street, which will probably look like a bar or club to a passer-by.

The building was designed by San Diego-based FoundationForForm, which also designed the nearby Eitol Towers in Hillcrest and The Earnest building in North Park. HG Fenton said the idea behind the design was to have a lot of open areas, big windows and lots of breezes passing through.

BLVD is situated at the edge of North Park at 2020 El Cajon Blvd. It is about 450 feet from the pink and blue “The Boulevard” sign erected in 1989. The complex will also have a distinctive marker with a roughly three-story block letter “B-L-V-D” facing the street.

Still to come is a historical marker to honor the Michels-Carey house, which once occupied the site. The property was a home to founders of the local gay rights movement and the San Diego LGBT Community Center. LGBT activists had argued the house was historic before it was demolished by in 2015. The city had issued a demolition permit for the house, but the city later said it was done by mistake before it could be reviewed by the historic resources staff.

Alana Coons, education and communications director with preservationist group Save Our History Organisation, said the building was destroyed in less than 30 minutes. She said city staff attempted to correct the mistake by issuing a stop-work order, but the house was already demolished.

In the years since, the company said it has continued discussions with San Diego LGBTQ group Lambda Archives to create a marker that will honor the site. HG Fenton said it would be a few more weeks before it is ready to reveal

the installation.

Before BLVD, the biggest North Park apartment complex was Broadstone North Park with 118 apartments. The building, completed in 2018, is near the intersection of Texas Street and El Cajon Boulevard about three blocks away from BLVD.

Other large North Park apartment complexes include Park Villas with 78 units; Terrace Villas with 48 apartments; and North Park Towers with 47 apartments. The biggest apartment complex in University Heights is the Catalina complex on Cleveland Avenue with 24 apartments.



BLVD North Park rendering (HG Fenton)

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### **BLVD North Park**

#### *Rental rates*

- One bedroom (526 to 725 square feet): \$1,825 to \$3,500
- One bedroom with loft (711 to 865 square feet): \$2,100 to \$2,700
- Two bedroom (831 to 1,310 square feet): \$2,650 to \$4,500
- Two bedroom with loft (1,078 to 1,195 square feet): \$3,150 to \$3,600