

IN THE REGION | WESTCHESTER

Renovating a Low-Income Yonkers Rental Complex

By ELSA BRENNER

YONKERS—A TOWERING five-building apartment complex here, built three decades ago under a federal assistance program, is being renovated and preserved for low- and moderate-income tenants. It is an exception to the trend in recent years of upgrading such publicly financed projects to market-rate and luxury units as government agreements that were struck 20 and 30 years ago expire.

Soaring as high as 19 stories over this city, with views of the Hudson River to the west and a dense network of commuter highways to the north and east, the 311-unit Parkledge Apartments has been home since the early 1970's to generations of residents like Terrance Hardy, an emergency medical technician with the New York City Fire Department. Mr. Hardy moved to a two-bedroom apartment here a decade ago with his mother and now lives in a four-bedroom unit with his wife, Denise, and four children. Under the deal struck by Parkledge's new owner, the Wishcamper Group of Portland, Me., the complex will continue to offer below-market-rate units to income-eligible tenants. Wishcamper, a for-profit real estate development company that specializes in acquiring, rehabilitating and preserving housing for poor and moderate-income tenants, purchased the five buildings last summer from the Ginsburg Development



Rendering of Renovated Parkledge Apartments

Companies of Hawthorne for about \$30 million.

But Ginsburg had agreed to the sale, according to Brian Poulin, a Wishcamper principal, "only with the understanding that we continue its use."

"The complex could have been repositioned," Mr. Poulin said. "It's located in a high-demand area where you typically see the most intense push to convert. But that's also often where affordable housing is needed the most."

An example of the growing demand for upscale housing on the west side of Yonkers is seen on the waterfront, where Collins Enterprises, the first residential developer in Down-

town Yonkers in more than 30 years, has built Hudson 266 one-and-two-bedroom apartments.

But Martin Ginsburg, president of Ginsburg Development, said that his company — which builds market-rate housing in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Florida — wanted the Parkledge property to remain available to low-income tenants.

"There's a shortage of affordable housing as it is, and we certainly didn't want to add to the problem," Mr. Ginsburg said. When first proposed in the early 1970's, the complex met with resistance from residents

in a nearby neighborhood, Nodine Hill, who did not want the imposing precast concrete low-income housing project erected next to single-family homes.

Situated on Yonkers Avenue next to the Saw Mill River Parkway and minutes from the New York City line, Parkledge has a 10-story apartment house and three smaller buildings, in addition to the main 19-story residential tower.

Wishcamper is spending \$13 million for renovations that include replacing all windows and wall louvers, restoring the buildings' facades, installing a

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