



ELDA Developments is looking to revitalize Normal Heights along El Cajon Blvd. by converting smaller, underutilized lots into micro-apartment housing. Rendering courtesy of ELDA Developments

Micro-Apartment Project Aims to Transform Normal Heights

REAL ESTATE: ELDA Developments Promotes 'Value' of Lots Along El Cajon Blvd.

■ By RAY HUARD

SAN DIEGO — ELDA Developments, based in Old Town, is building a Normal Heights micro-apartment building that CEO **Ahmed Eldahmy** said will start transforming the neighborhood.

"I think it will be a huge value to the lots around it," Eldahmy said. "It can revitalize the neighborhood and attract businesses as well."

Eldahmy said that he's hoping that the project at the edge of North Park, El Cajon Boulevard Residences at 3450 El Cajon Blvd., will serve as a catalyst for neighboring property owners to redevelop their property.

"People don't understand the value of their lots until they see what can be built on them," Eldahmy said. "If you take a look at this market, between 33rd and 37th Streets on El Cajon Boulevard, its mostly auto repair shops, and parking lots. Maybe, there's one or two apartment projects, but they're very old."

His goal is "to be the first to transform this neighborhood to be an extension of North Park," Eldahmy said.

"We see this area as a very, very desirable area," Eldahmy said. "It can be transformed into a beautiful San Diego market and, hopefully, we can achieve that for the whole market."

Designed by **OB Architecture**, Eldahmy said that the look of the five-story building is meant to evoke apartment projects in Little Italy, with the exteriors made of scrolled aluminum panels.

Built on a 5,000-square-foot lot, the complex will have 27 apartments in a mix of studio apartments and one-bedroom apartments, all of which are adaptable for disabled renters and 12 of which will be earmarked for low-income tenants, according to Eldahmy.

"One of the things we do as a philosophy is, we like to get as many ADA units as possible," Eldahmy said.

Creating Community

The apartments will range from 400 square feet to 650 square feet.

Although relatively small, Eldahmy said that the apartments are "semi-luxury."

"We pay attention to the details in the design, the air flow,

the colors, making sure the space is open," Eldahmy said. "Although the square footage is small, they can actually feel a lot bigger."

Ceiling heights ranging from 10 feet to 14.5 feet helping to help add a sense of spaciousness, as do apartment balconies and tall windows that flood the apartments with sunlight.

"It just adds to the vibe of the building," Eldahmy said.

Some of the apartments also have Murphy beds that fold up to conserve space.

A color palette of white and off-white with black accents in the apartments also "gives that open feeling" and provides a blank canvas for tenants to personalize their space, Eldahmy said.

Amenities include an interior courtyard, a roof deck with a fireplace and barbecue station and washers and dryers in every unit, with Wi-Fi throughout the building.

"Usually, our clientele is young families, small families, a young professional. They don't need a lot of space, but they enjoy the city life," Eldahmy said. "We design accordingly."

Eldahmy said that he hopes to attract a coffee shop to fill the 404 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor "to create that sense of community."

Estimated monthly rents, as listed on the company website, will range from \$2,400 to \$2,600.

The building is scheduled to be finished in February, but Eldahmy said that he's already started an interest list.

"It's overwhelming. We have about 200 and change applications, which tells you there is a huge need for these kinds of projects," Eldahmy said. ■

ELDA Developments

ELDA DEVELOPMENTS

FOUNDED: 2013

HEADQUARTERS: Old Town

CEO: Ahmed Eldahmy

BUSINESS: housing developer

EMPLOYEES: 8

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NOTABLE: ELDA Developments is a community-focused developer working solely on San Diego projects.