

Downtown living gets lofty

Huntington, W.Va., condos offer beauty, convenience

Story **Jennifer Chapman** | Photography **Jessica St. James**

Meghan Elkins considers her downtown Huntington condominium purchase sheer luck. An optometrist in her late 20s, she was looking for a place to call her own when some friends and a real estate agent suggested she take a look at the condos being developed in the Renaissance building along Fourth Avenue in Huntington, W.Va.

Elkins fell in love with it quickly, feeling a vision for the place, as well as an energy in the downtown Huntington area. “I could feel the resurgence of downtown and the atmosphere,” she said.

Popular in big cities, downtown loft living is making its way in the Tri-State, with new condos springing up across Huntington and Ashland, Ky.

Shane Radcliff, real estate broker and developer in Huntington and of the Renaissance building condos, said more and more people are coming back downtown.

“It’s convenience,” Radcliff said. “Every restaurant, every movie theater, ice cream shop, every store we go to is within a block of this building.”

Elkins agrees, and said it’s a plus being right in the middle of where the action is.

“Being down here in downtown, if I do want to grab some food, it’s right across the street, next door, around the corner. On a nice day I could walk to Marshall football games.”

While some of the buyers are new to the area, some of them were already Huntington residents who just decided they didn’t want the maintenance that comes along with a typical home.

“They didn’t want to rake the leaves, cut the grass, maintain a roof,” Radcliff said. “There are a lot of people wanting to move downtown right now.”

In the Renaissance building alone, there are 12 new condos, and without advertising, Radcliff said they have sold all but three before they are even finished.

Radcliff describes the condos as luxury, with 12-foot ceilings, and high-end appliances and cabinets, and a first-floor fitness center when the project is complete.

The sizes of the condos are as diverse as the people who occupy them. A two-bedroom, two-bath condo of 1,500 square feet is finished with wood flooring, built-in shelving throughout the living area and a brick wall surrounding large windows.

A condo with 2,600 square feet is equipped with two











master suites and features an open concept, along with an octagon tray ceiling, and recesses through the hallway with lighting to display art.

The largest condo is 5,200 square feet of space on two stories, with a private elevator within the apartment for the two floors, and double-sided fireplaces between the dining and living rooms, as well as an expansive view of downtown Huntington.

“You can see fireworks right from the front window,” Radcliff said. “Every unit is different.”

Buying a new condo has its perks, as Radcliff said buyers have been able to choose their own paint, cabinet colors, and finishes, as well as options for upgrades. Some options in the layout have been switched up by the buyer, with some choosing an open concept, or others a divided dining and living area. An old freight elevator shaft in the condos gave the buyers an opportunity to make a unique space in their condos, with one making it a bar, another turning it into an office, and another using it as an access to a loft area.

“They can get exactly what they want,” Radcliff said.

The Renaissance building started out as a department store in the 1930s and 1940s, then a furniture store in the ‘60s and ‘70s, and a bookstore and a nightclub in the ‘90s. When Radcliff purchased the property, it was gutted. “There was nothing, just a big, open 9,000-square-foot space.”

Starting from scratch means everything from electrical systems to plumbing is new for the buyer. This was a plus for Elkins as well.

“You know that the building is safe,” she said, “and you can put your personal touches. You know the quality of materials is top notch.”

Another feature Radcliff noticed for the homebuyer is security. With cameras and controlled access to the upper floors, safety is an added bonus.

Living in her condo since August, Elkins has enjoyed it all from choosing the features of her home to the peaceful feel of the city.

“You get the hustle and bustle, but it’s still very relaxing to live here,” Elkins said.

“It’s been a fun ride, for sure,” she added. ☪

DOWNTOWN LOFTS

For more information on downtown living options or for a tour of available condos, Shane Radcliff can be contacted at 304-634-5993.