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Transit-friendly Glen Ridge apartments will have movie theater, billiards room



The Clarus Glen Ridge, 110 luxury rental apartments just over the Montclair border in Glen Ridge, is nearly completed and leasing soon. *Julia Martin*

The Clarus Glen Ridge, a new luxury rental apartment building in Glen Ridge near Montclair's Bay Street train station, is nearly complete, according to a release from builder Joseph Forgione of JMF Properties.

The building's 110 apartments on 2.2 acres on Baldwin Street, previously occupied by five private homes, consist of 47 one-bedrooms and 46 two-bedroom units. There's a gym, covered parking for 188 cars and a dog park.

There are also 17 affordable housing units, including several three-bedroom apartments. Applications for the affordable units closed June 30.

In the style of many new downtown buildings, Clarus apartments are on the smaller side, with spacious common areas. The building has a lobby lounge with a two-sided fireplace; a reading lounge; a parlor with fireplace and wet bar; a business center; a movie theater, billiards room and courtyard with grills and firepits.

Rent for a one-bedroom starts at \$2,500; two-bedrooms start in the low \$3,000s, with higher prices for apartments with balconies and/or dens.

New construction is an anomaly in Glen Ridge, a borough of 7,000 where developable land is a rarity and 90% of the town is designated a historic district.

Borough Administrator Mike Zichelli said Forgione "created his own opportunity" by buying the Baldwin Street homes and then promising to help the town meet its affordable housing commitment if he were allowed to build the apartments.

With the five homes deemed "unsafe, substandard, dilapidated or obsolescent," the area qualified as an area in need of redevelopment, which meant the homes could be demolished and the developer's costs lowered through a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program.

Though building during the pandemic caused some delays, it also allowed for some last-minute design changes, according to the builder. For example, private workspaces were added to the business center, dens were added to some units and the design of the parking lot was changed to allow residents direct access to their floors, for those who want to socially distance.

The first leases will be signed beginning in late July, with a move-in date of August 15.