

Wynnewood Seminary To Become 'Modern Luxury' Apartments

Sneak peek: Historic Palmer Seminary will become a transit-oriented apartment complex with an outdoor movie pavillion, pool, 24/7 gym and business center. Construction will begin in October.

By [Amanda Mahnke](#) | [Email the author](#) | 5:45 am

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After 72 years in Wynnewood, [Palmer Theological Seminary](#) has vacated its property at the corner of Lancaster Avenue and City Avenue—but the spot won't be vacant for long. [Cross Properties](#), which plans to turn the seminary's hall and chapel into 132 apartments, will begin construction in October, according to Kevin Michals, a principal at the company.

"Our thesis is that there hasn't been a new apartment complex on the Main Line in over 50 years," Michals said. "... Up until now, the community is all 1920s to 1950s-era: old products with windows that don't work, without modern HVAC, no common amenities, no pool—and a great natural open space is pretty unheard of."

Cross Properties wants to bring a modern product to the Main Line, Michals said, with apartments that include amenities like an outdoor movie pavillion, a yoga room and business center. A new, innovative apartment design "simply hasn't happened in decades in what we think is somewhat of a starved area," Michals said.

The construction process will take about 14 months, but at the end of it, the property will boast a set of brand new "modern luxury" apartments, with washers and dryers in every unit, hardwood floors, and extra large showers and closets. More than 40 units will include original historic fireplaces, and about 20 will include exterior balconies, according to a plan provided by Cross Properties.

Besides completing revamping the existing building, plans for the site include:

- A 24/7 fitness center with cardio equipment and a yoga room
- A private pool
- An outdoor movie pavillion with a projector
- An outdoor firepit and cabana
- A TV/movie lounge
- A business center available 24/7 for meetings and events
- Glass soundproof study rooms for small groups and individuals
- A private gameroom with a poker table and pool table
- A gourmet kitchen that can be reserved for private parties/events and will also host social mixers for residents

The idea of a "transit-oriented community" is another important aspect of the site plan. Not only is the location a 10-minute walk to the Overbrook R5 station, but current plans for the Palmer apartments also call for a car-share program and a shuttle to SEPTA and [Lankenau Hospital](#).

The landmark building, which opened in 1922 as the Green Hill Farms Hotel, is now listed on national, state and township registers of historic buildings, Michals said. Those designations limit the changes developers can make to the property (the building's facade will largely remain the same), but they also allow for concessions in some other areas.

In the future, that could potentially allow for some commercial space on the property, Michals said, but that's not something being actively considered right now.

About 70 percent of the site's apartments will be one-bedroom, for which rent will start at \$1,350/mo, Michals said. Another 25 percent will be two-bedroom apartments (beginning at \$1,750/mo), and the remaining 5 percent will be a mix of studio and three-bedroom apartments.

Because of the apartment size, many tenants will likely be post-college young professionals, Kenneth Aaron of Weir & Partners, representing the applicant, said in an interview with Patch in spring. Michals anticipates that the complex may also be a popular spot for employees of nearby Lankenau Hospital, due to its proximity and relative affordability for approximately 75 percent of Lankenau employees, he said.

Construction should begin in mid-October, following final approval from the National Register of Historic Places, Michals said. With an anticipated 14-month construction process, Michals said that pre-leasing of properties will begin in early fall 2013. Cross Properties is looking at early 2014 for move-ins to begin.



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