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Apartment Hunt: River North Park makes major enhancements to ‘remain relevant’

By PAMELA DITTMER MCKUEN



The "Park" in River North Park refers to a sprawling landscaped roof deck lounge, which was completely rebuilt atop the building's parking garage. It includes conversation groupings of cushioned furniture, five grilling stations with covered dining areas, cabanas, fire pits, a dog run, a bar with a television, a dipping pool and a sundeck. (Jim Tschetter/IC360 Images)

When River North Park was built in 1986, the 24-story apartment community was a forerunner of the residential revolution to come. Since then, a host of gleaming skyscrapers has soared into the heavens, and industrial warehouses have been transformed into contemporary lofts. Trendy eateries, bars, boutiques and galleries joined them.

The time had come for River North Park to step up its pace.

The building recently underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation that includes enhanced outdoor spaces, extensive amenity upgrades, apartment remodels and a lobby makeover.

“The way apartment construction was done in the ’80s is much different than what it is today,” said Lela Cirjakovic, executive vice president of operations at Chicago-based Waterton, one of the owners. “Because there has been so much new development and interest in the River North market, we wanted to remain relevant.”

From the neighborhood’s urban streetscape, the name “River North Park” might seem to be a misnomer. It’s not.

“‘Park’ really refers to our second-floor amenity,” Cirjakovic said. “It’s our oasis, our urban park. There is no way you would know it exists if you are just walking by on the street, so there is some intrigue in the name.”



River North Park, located at 320 W. Illinois St., recently underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation that includes enhanced outdoor spaces, extensive amenity upgrades, apartment remodels and a lobby makeover. (Jim Tschetter/IC360 Images)

That hidden amenity is a sprawling landscaped roof deck lounge, which was completely rebuilt atop the building’s parking garage. Amid the grass, flower beds, planters and trees are conversation groupings of cushioned furniture, five grilling stations with covered dining areas, cabanas, fire pits, a dog run, a bar with a television, a dipping pool and a sundeck.

The 400 units at River North Park range from studios to two bedrooms located on the second through 24th floors. They are configured into eight floor plans, including 22 two-story, two-bedroom townhomes with patios that stretch into the roof deck lounge. The apartments are located on floors two through 24. Retail and commercial enterprises wrap the street level.



The clubhouse lounge features a full kitchen and collaboration area outfitted with vinyl plank flooring, modern furnishings and seating. (Jim Tschetter/IC360 Images)

Apartments were upgraded with vinyl woodgrain flooring, stainless steel appliances, solid surface countertops, and either raised-panel maple or Eurostyle matte gray cabinets. Bathrooms sport new vanities, mirrors, floors and lighting. The units also come with roller shades and closet organizers. Bay windows are per plan.

Depending on the floor plan, walls that boxed in kitchens and shielded them from light were torn down.

“Someone who enjoys cooking or entertaining can be standing at the kitchen counter while having a great conversation with their guests,” Cirjakovic said.

A one-bedroom model, measuring 724 square feet, is divided roughly in half. A combination kitchen and living space, semipartitioned by a stationary storage island with breakfast seating, is on one side. The bedroom and bath are on the other side. The bath has a Euro-style vanity and tub with shower. The unit also has three closets: A guest closet with linen storage, a double-hung linear closet, and a walk-in.



“Because there has been so much new development and interest in the River North market, we wanted to remain relevant,” said Lela Cirjakovic, executive vice president of operations at Chicago-based Waterton. (Jim Tschetter/IC360 Images)

River North Park

320 W. Illinois St.

Chicago, IL 60654

www.rivernorthpark.com

312-321-3200

Apartments: Prices based on availability and subject to change. Studio, 430 to 493 square feet, from \$1,575; convertible, 593 square feet, from \$1,910; one-bedroom, 724 to 774 square feet, from \$2,050; two-bedroom town home, 1,161 square feet, from \$3,135; two-bedroom, 1,181 square feet, from \$3,470.

Lease terms: 3- to 12-month lease terms; \$60 application fee and \$450 administration fee.

Renter’s insurance: Required.

Utilities: Resident pays all utilities.

Parking: Onsite garage parking for \$240 a month.

Pets: Two-pet maximum. One-time \$300 cat fee and \$500 dog fee. Breed restrictions apply.

Smoking policy: Nonsmoking.

The amenities

A welcoming, light-filled lobby is dressed in soft gray tones with golden accents and furnished with multiple seating areas and a fireplace. An attendant is on duty at the reception desk 24 hours. Within the corridors are the community laundry, mail room, valet dry cleaning and package service. In addition to the roof deck lounge, the amenity package includes two redesigned community lounges, one with a demonstration kitchen and one with a library and co-working stations. The 24-hour fitness center was overhauled with new spaces and new equipment for cardio- and strength-training, yoga, cycling, locker rooms with showers, and more. Wi-Fi is complimentary in common areas.



River North Park's amenity package includes two redesigned community lounges, one with a demonstration kitchen and one with a library and co-working stations.

The folks behind it

River North Park is co-owned by Waterton and New York City-based Angelo Gordon investment firm. Waterton also manages the building. The renovation architect of record is Chipman Design Architecture, and the interior designer is Brass Tacks Studio.

Pamela Dittmer McKuen is a freelance writer.