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# The next big thing on H Street NE: Rock Creek details its plans for the 600 block

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There may be no single block in D.C. undergoing a seismic shift like the 600 block of H Street NE.

What was, only last year, a block dominated by a self-storage

business, a deteriorating grocery store and an unattractive office complex will, within a matter of years, welcome the corridor's first Whole Foods and nearly 800 luxury



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apartments.

Now comes details of the project that will round out the 600 block's transformation.

As we first reported in May and again in June, Rock Creek Property Group and Cornerstone Development Group acquired 646-654 H St. NE from Pilgrim Baptist Church for \$4.5 million. On Monday, the development team filed applications with the Board of Zoning Adjustments seeking variances for the project.

While the facade of 654 H (originally constructed in 1906) is to be preserved, the remaining buildings will be demolished to clear the way for a 26- to 32-unit residential project with up to 15,000 square feet of retail. The split between retail and residential will depend on how the second floor is developed, Rock Creek partner Gary Schlager told me Monday. Rock Creek also has not committed to apartments or condos, though for-sale units are more likely.

"I really do believe it's the best corner on the H Street corridor," Schlager said, adding he would like to be in the ground "yesterday." "We'll be the small, boutique jewel on the corner amongst the larger projects."

Given that it is basically adjacent to a massive 90-foot-high planned-unit development, the Rock Creek site begs "for a substantial redevelopment project," according to a statement of justification filed with the Board of Zoning Adjustments.

A tiny storefront (a sushi joint) is all that separates the Rock Creek project from Insight Property Group's 432-unit, Whole Foods-anchored mixed-use building taking the place of the H Street self-storage and Murry's grocery store. Across the street, Jair Lynch Development Partners is building a 307-unit, two-building complex.

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