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Howard University, developer to launch \$62M mixed-use Georgia Avenue project

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Howard University and Rock Creek Property Group will break ground this month on a new mixed-use development adjacent to the campus' north entrance in Pleasant Plains.

The partners will develop a \$62 million building at the corner of George Avenue and Fairmont Street NW, across from Sankofa Video Books & Café. The vacant buildings at 2711 Georgia Ave. NW,



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Howard University is working with Rock Creek Property Group for a new mixed-use development on the corner of

formerly the Effingham
Apartments, will be torn
down and replaced with The

Georgia Avenue and Fairmont
Street.

Oliver, a five-story, 140,000-square-foot facility slated to include 93 fully furnished residential units, a lounge area and deck overlooking the university's campus, space to house Howard's offices of development and alumni relations and university communications, and underground parking.

The building is named after Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, a Union Army Civil War commander who played a key role in Howard University's founding. The exact groundbreaking date isn't identified yet, said a spokesperson for Howard's office of real estate development and capital asset management.

Howard, which owns the land on which the Effingham currently stands, will occupy all 41,000 square feet of commercial space available in the building for its office through fee simple ownership. The goal of this space is to locate administrative offices closer to campus, provide housing for graduate students and recent graduates as well as other D.C. residents to contribute to the region's housing needs and keep up with its own growth.

Howard University President Wayne Frederick said in an interview that new development is key to the university's real estate strategy.

"When I look at the landscape around Howard and how much that has changed as well — to be quite honest, affordability being one aspect of that — we certainly do want to contribute to affordable housing and giving people more options," Frederick said. "This is fitting with our larger footprint. When we look at the other end of the Georgia Avenue as well, we're trying to make some acquisitions there, as well, to make a gateway."

GTM Architects designed the building, led by Colline Hernandez-Ayala, a multifamily mixed-use studio specialist whose parents first met at the university. Howard is also working with D.C.-based engineering firm Hayat Brown and

Bethesda-based law firm Lerch Early & Brewer on this project.

At least 10% of the project equity will be sourced from businesses owned by people of color and/or women and 35% of contractors and consultants will be certified business entities, the university said.

Rock Creek, a D.C.-based real estate investor and developer, will offer internships, scholarships and real estate development seminars to Howard University students through this partnership. The group also owns the building located at 1851 Ninth St. NW, which Howard uses for office and administrative space.

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