

## Real Estate

# A 30-condo vote of confidence in D.C.



The Fold is a 30-unit condominium building near the U Street corridor. Prices for the available units range from \$449,900 to \$699,900. (Benjamin C Tankersley/For The Washington Post)

**By Scott Sowers** November 9, 2021

The coronavirus pandemic has caused many people to move from cities to the suburbs' less-crowded places. Still, Lynn Hackney, principal of D.C.-based Community Three, remains bullish on building, buying and living in Washington.

"The idea that cities are not coming back is already proving to be a false prediction," said Hackney, whose firm is developing the 30-unit Fold condominium building near the U Street corridor. She said that D.C. rentals "are going crazy" and that a "huge increase of people going back" to the office is expected late this year or early next year.

The Fold's location, at 1999 9½ St. NW, is one of the six-story building's biggest selling points, as people head back to office and look for homes with easy commutes to downtown, said Ekaterina Cathey, sales manager at Urban Pace, which is handling sales and marketing.

About half of the Fold's 30 units are available for purchase, and Cathey said prices for them range from \$449,900 for 580 square feet to \$699,900 for 865 square feet. One- and two-bedroom units are available. They all have one bathroom. Move-ins are projected to begin in mid-December.

Condo fees range from \$200 to \$400 a month, depending on the size of the unit. Parking spaces go for \$37,500. The building has an elevator and a lobby with a wall mural.

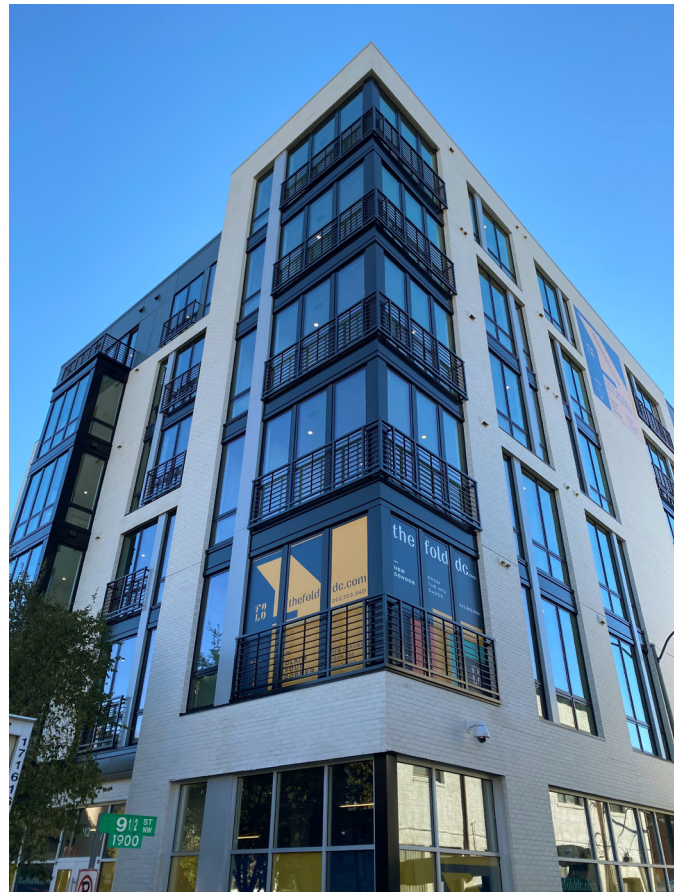
Developers and architects have been retooling building designs because of the pandemic to provide more outdoor space, more space for working from home and bigger common spaces, such as mail rooms. Most of the Fold's units have a balcony. "The big one is the outdoor space," Hackney said. "It's more valuable now than it's ever been. If you can't do individual private outdoor space — which is hard to do in the city — you have to have some kind of outdoor space amenity."

Community Three was thinking about people working from home even before the pandemic. That interest is reflected in the Fold units' interior design.

The Fold's units, for instance, have built-in workstations that were designed before the pandemic because, Hackney said, "there was already a trend of people working remotely, particularly on certain days of the week."



Now there is pandemic-related speculation about empty city office buildings being turned into housing, and Community Three is already in the process of converting



four of them. But construction techniques limit the possibilities, Hackney said. "It's not a big lift on the zoning, for the most part," she said. "The big challenge is the way the floor plates lay out with the columns and the window lines. Most offices you cannot convert to residential."

Meanwhile, the U Street corridor — though still a popular place to get a drink, have a meal or listen to music — is among those D.C. neighborhoods that are becoming more residential, responding to the demand for housing in the city and the area.

"Neighborhoods mature," Hackney said. She said U Street is "following that urban path. It's at the point now where more residential is going in and people are deciding they want to make it their home instead of just a destination to have a drink or go to a restaurant. That's one of the reasons we thought this was a great opportunity."





## The Fold

1999 9½ St. NW, Washington

Thirty condos are being built; 15 are currently available for purchase. Prices for the available units range from \$449,900 to \$699,900.

**Developer:** Community Three

**Schools:** Garrison Elementary, Cardoza Education Campus (middle and high school).

**Transit:** The U Street Metro station (Green and Yellow lines) is less than a mile west. The Shaw-Howard Metro station (Green and Yellow lines) is less than a mile southwest. Buses run on U Street, Florida Avenue and Georgia Avenue.

**Nearby:** Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, 9:30 Club, Lincoln Theatre, Howard Theatre, Howard University, DC9 club,

Ben's Chili Bowl.

**Features:** The units have Energy Star-rated appliances, Nest thermostats and LED lighting. The kitchens have cultured quartz countertops, a porcelain tile backsplashes, under-cabinet lighting and Kohler fixtures. The units have solid-core wood doors, nine-foot-high ceilings, closets with storage systems and full-size front-loading washers and dryers. Most units have a balcony.

**Bedrooms/bathrooms:** 1 or 2 / 1

**Square-footage:** 580 to 865

Condo fees: \$200 to \$400 a month.

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