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Jewish Association on Aging to build 'apartment for life' housing

By Paul J. Gough



Jewish Association on Aging site, Google Earth

The Jewish Association on Aging is planning to build a several-story, independent living tower on its grounds in what would be the largest project it has done since the Squirrel Hill campus was built three decades ago.

The organization is in the early stages of development on the tower, with between 75 and 80 one- and two-bedroom apartments and a cost between \$20 million and \$30 million to build, according to Deborah Winn-

Horvitz, president and CEO of the Jewish Association on Aging. The tower would be located on open space in the back of its campus on JHF Drive overlooking Homestead and the Monongahela River adjacent to the Summerset at Frick Park development.

JAA recently hired Rothschild Doyno Collaborative in Pittsburgh as an architect and expects to have plans drawn up within the next six months and an estimated time line of two to three years to

build and occupy.

The apartments would be built under the "apartment for life" concept, which provides for independent living for seniors with nursing care or assisted living services available if required in the future.

"It will be connected to the continuum of care" that has been built by JAA at its campus in Squirrel Hill, Winn-Horvitz said. "It's the best of both worlds."

It's a new concept for JAA,

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which provides a host of services for seniors including residential, Alzheimer's and dementia care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, and, opened earlier this year, the Ahava Memory Care Center of Excellence. But Winn-Horvitz said that today's senior citizens — and Baby Boomers who are about to become senior citizens — have a different and more active view of aging than their parents, and that's being reflected in the "apartment for life concept."

Winn-Horvitz said that JAA did extensive focus groups to determine the needs. That's why

the apartment for life's offerings will be one- and two-bedroom units with dens and no studio apartments. People in the focus groups told the JAA that they wanted the second bedroom for grandchildren to stay while visiting, Winn-Horvitz said.

"This is not your grandma's apartment," said architect Daniel Rothschild, principal of Rothschild Doyno Collaborative. He said that all of the tower's amenities have yet to be decided, but they would be cutting edge.

"We're thinking of this as a progressive environment

for active seniors that will be modeled on the new modern apartment buildings that we've seen springing up in Pittsburgh, rather than looking toward traditional senior housing environments," Rothschild said. Rothschild recently won an AIA Pittsburgh Design Award for one of those new modern apartment buildings, The Foundry at 41st in Lawrenceville.

"The site has breathtaking views over the river valley and the panoramic connection to the environment is very, very strong," said Rothschild of the JAA site.