

HOT OFF THE PRESS

AS THE OLD *BOSTON HERALD* BLOCK IS TURNED INTO A GLAM URBAN RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX, THE SOUTH END AND SOUTH BOSTON ARE BRINGING BACK A PIECE OF LOCAL HISTORY. **BY ALEXANDRA HALL**

Hunched up against one side of the Southeast Expressway, surrounded by parking lots and the thrum of traffic, 26 West Broadway and vicinity has been, for as long as many of us can remember, a no-man's-land. The building was the headquarters of one of the city's biggest newspapers, but beyond that, no one ever had much reason to want to go there. In fact, the area's stagnancy actually created a wedge—a divider between the independently dynamic neighborhoods of the South End and South Boston.

As of this spring, however, that's going to end with the opening of Ink Block, a highly stylish combination of living, eating, fitness, recreation, and shopping spaces. It serves as the connector between those two aforementioned key sections of the city, as well as being a boldly designed neighborhood in its

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The living room of an apartment at Ink Block, which blends the neighborhood's grittiness with urban sophistication.



own right. And its developers hope to renew not just the area, but also the thriving energy it once had, long before it became a no-man's-land.

“From the mid-19th century until the mid-20th century, the neighborhood was a classic mixed-use community,” says Ted Tye, managing partner of the firm National Development, which bought the old *Boston Herald* site in 2006. “It was filled with restaurants, theaters, stores, and residences. My idea was to bring that back by creating an urban village where everything is at your fingertips.”

In that village, which is opening in several stages over the course of this spring, condo owners and renters occupy a labyrinth of six sleek buildings, featuring two rooftops with killer city views, a full-service fitness center, and a Peet's Coffee & Tea shop, along with a slew of amenities, such as concierge service, lounge areas with Wi-Fi, shared workspaces, and an art collection throughout the complex that might make the ICA a tad insecure.

The fulcrum of it all is a 50,000-square-foot Whole Foods Market, with free weekend valet parking; a handful of open-space eateries, including a fish shack and a café; and a spa that offers everything from ultrasonic facials and brow waxes to pedis. “Ink Block really is its own little city,” says Tye.

The residential units aren't too shabby either, with rentals starting at about \$2,500 a month and condos priced from \$500,000 to upwards of \$2 million. While one building's hallways are decorated with strips of newspaper (a tribute to the previous tenant), another is done in black and white, with Roy Lichtenstein characters on the hallway walls. Yet another has a traditional South End design, with clean exterior lines that suggest it might have once been a warehouse. “We embraced the grittiness of the neighborhood,” Tye explains, “but also its sophistication.”

Across the way, bordering Traveler, Albany, and East Berkeley Streets, another development is also helping in the neighborhood's rapid transformation. Called Troy Boston, it's a \$185 million mixed-use



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A kitchen in an Ink Block apartment; the living room of a studio; an aerial rendering of Ink Block.

building, certified LEED Gold—which means it's about as sustainable as you can get, thanks largely to an internal power plant. Think dizzying views, a cabana-lined outdoor pool, rooftop terraces with barbecues and a demonstration kitchen, a yoga studio, and an outdoor dog run.

Surrounding the two complexes are a variety of new diversions—restaurants such as Barcelona Wine Bar (the second in Boston) and The Gallows, and recreational spots like The Intraspace Project, an urban park complete with a performance area, a dog park, and a boardwalk, all located directly between the South End and South Boston. “It's all part of making the distance between the two neighborhoods smaller,” says Tye. “A few years ago, no one would walk under the bridge to the T station. Now that area is safe and people go back and forth across all the time.”

Further boosting activity in the community will be a lively alfresco scene, thanks to the open-air tables of restaurants that are about to start settling in, creating a stream of sidewalk buzz. “That's really part of reinventing a neighborhood,” Tye says, “bringing an energy to the streets themselves.” 300 Harrison Ave., 855-688-1558; inkblockboston.com **BC**

THE BATTLE OF TROY

Amenities meet sustainability in this new development.

When Kelly Saito, a partner at the real estate developer Gerding Edlen, and his team set out to design Troy Boston, their mission was twofold: to create a mixed-use residential complex that was as ecologically friendly as possible, and to provide an unusually high level of interactivity for residents.

To meet the first goal, they built an internal power plant that's 25 percent more efficient than mandated by the city's current energy codes. They also appointed the apartments with energy-saving appliances and impeccably modern wood floors made from 82 percent recycled material.

The second part of their mission was trickier, says Saito. “Everyone always wants to add more perks when they design—pools, big gyms, and all that. We did too, but we spread them throughout the entire project instead of lumping them together.” The result gives residents reasons to visit different areas of the complex. One roof deck, for example, is all about the view, while another is more about hanging out at the barbecue. The vibe at the café lounge is entirely different from that of the pool on the other side of the building. “It's meant to create more opportunities for interactivity,” says Saito. “Residents have more diverse experiences in daily life.” 55 Traveler St., 617-426-5300; troyboston.com