

New Apartment Buildings Rising on Formerly Vacant Harlem Block

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The Central Harlem buildings on a formerly vacant block will be reserved for low- and middle-income tenants.

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The Douglass, a building for low-income renters is under construction at the corner of Frederick Douglass Boulevard and West 128th Street in Harlem. (DNAinfo/Jon Schuppe)

By Jon Schuppe

DNAinfo Reporter/Producer

HARLEM — A \$100 million city-backed makeover of a once-vacant square block in Central Harlem is entering its final stretch, with developers now looking to fill two new apartment buildings with middle- and low-income tenants.

[Douglass Park](#), an eight-story apartment building at the southwest corner of Frederick Douglass Boulevard and West 128th Street, will contain 70 apartments, all reserved for low-income residents. The Balton, at the northeast corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 127th Street, will be mixed-income, meaning that a quarter of the 156 units will be set aside for low-income tenants.

The buildings are expected to open early next year.

The projects are part of a wave of new residential construction currently underway across Harlem, the result of a multi-year effort by the city to encourage the development of new affordable and market rate housing in troubled neighborhoods. Many of the Harlem projects were already underway when the real-estate bubble burst in 2008, and are only now coming to fruition.

In this case, the developments were made possible by a 2008 rezoning of an entire square block that was mostly empty, save for one unoccupied building. The developer, Richman Group Development Corp. [received help from several government agencies](#), mainly in the form of tax credits and low-cost loans.

Tenants of both buildings will be chosen through a lottery overseen by the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Richman recently began accepting applications for the Douglass Park lottery; the deadline is Dec. 21. The application process for The Balton's middle-income units will begin Dec. 1, to be followed by the low-income units in January, a spokeswoman for the developer said.

The developer is also looking for retail tenants to occupy ground-floor commercial space, which will probably include pharmacies, dry cleaners or "small food markets," Richman spokeswoman Robin Druckman said.



The Balton, for middle- and low-income tenants, is being built at the corner of St. Nicholas Avenue and West 127th Street in Harlem. (DNAinfo/Jon Schuppe)