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Ohio developer planning market entry with new apartment complex near Universal's third gate



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Ohio-based apartment developer [Edwards Communities](#) is looking to enter the thriving Orlando multifamily market with a new, two-phased community just off Universal Boulevard.

Edwards and co-developer, Silver Hills Development Inc., are seeking Master Plan approval from the city to build the 540-unit complex on a 9-acre site at 5885 Lakehurst Dr. The vacant site is just north Lockheed Martin and near the intersection of Universal Boulevard and Sand Lake Road, where Universal

It would be constructed with 340 units in Phase 1 and 200 units in Phase 2. The four-story, elevator-served buildings will have structured parking and multiple interior courtyards. In the project description, the Silver Hills team says the community would “provide much needed concentrated housing options for theme park workers and others desiring to reside near the theme park attractions.”

They anticipate beginning construction on Phase 1 in September 2020. The company would complete and deliver the first phase before starting construction on Phase 2. Each phase would have its own amenity courtyard and pool, according to the site plan.

While the bulk of the Edwards Companies portfolio is located in Ohio, the co-developer does have experience in Central Florida. Before starting his own company, Silver Hills principal Seth Mendelsohn was a longtime executive with [Goldberg Companies](#), the North Carolina firm that developed Legacy Union Square in Davenport.

Ohio-based [Dimit Architects](#) designed the Orlando project to resemble a modern city block, with a mix of natural and painted brick, stucco and siding for the exterior treatments. The different rooflines and mix of arched and square windows also contribute to the facade, setting it apart from most other apartment projects being built in Orlando today.



The proposed master plan calls for 340 apartments to be constructed in Phase 1, outlined in red.

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The unit matrix, overwhelmingly composed of one-bedroom and studio units, also differentiates the design. The smallest studio units are just 468 square feet, while the largest units (two-bed, two-bath) approach 1,200 square feet. Each building floor also contains a single 331-square-foot guest-room unit with a small sitting area and en suite, but no kitchen, according to the plans.

Company officials were not immediately available for comment.

[DRMP Inc.](#) and [Bonnett Design Group](#) complete the development team. They've named the project Silver Hills at Universal and are scheduled to to the

The project would complement the revised Planned Development that was approved last year to facilitate the [redevelopment of the nearby Republic Square shopping center](#) into a 399-unit apartment community. That project is also being led by a new Orlando player: California-based Legacy Partners Residential, which is awaiting final approval of the building permits and expects to be underway later this year.

[Flournoy Partners is also building](#) the 330-unit Essex at Universal apartment complex next to TopGolf and just south of Lockheed Martin. The first units are scheduled for delivery before the end of the year.

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