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Where We Live Buckingham

Where the garden apartment blossomed

Arlington neighborhood still has lots of them among its affordable housing, amenities

BY HARRIET EDLESON

When Daniel Rego was looking for a home to buy in Arlington County not far from the Orange and Silver lines, he searched online for two-bedroom condos in his price range.

Two years ago, he found the Chatham, a condominium built in the mid-1960s in the Buckingham neighborhood and near the State Department's Foreign Service Institute.

The neighborhood is within walking distance of the Ballston Metro station. Another draw was that the condo was



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affordable — less than \$400,000. In addition, Rego said he likes the neighborhood's diversity and that it is not far from other areas along the Orange and Silver lines, such as Clarendon.

"For me, the Orange Metro always used to be my connection to D.C.," said Rego, 30, a tech executive and vice president of the Buckingham Community Civic Association.

📷 To see more photos of Buckingham, go to washingtonpost.com/realestate.

Kudos from Eleanor Roosevelt: Housing in Buckingham is mostly apartments — both market-rate and affordable units — condominiums and some single-family houses. Culpepper Garden at 4435 N. Pershing Dr. and the Carlin at 4300 N. Carlin Springs Rd. are senior housing



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The Buckingham Commons townhouse complex, built in 2009 on N. Henderson Road. The neighborhood consists mostly of apartments and condominiums, some of which were built in the 1930s.

buildings.

Buckingham is home to the Buckingham Village Historic District, part of which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. According to the Buckingham Community Civic Association Neighborhood Conservation Plan issued in 2006, much of the housing in the neighborhood was built beginning in 1936, and is part of the garden apartment

complex completed between 1937 and 1953.

Allie S. Freed, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, who had founded Paramount Communities in 1935, developed the garden apartment complex. Company president Freed owned Paramount Motors, a taxi manufacturer, and was chairman of the Committee for Economy Recovery and an associate of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Stein was a developer and Wright, a proponent of the Garden City movement, was the planner and architect. "Market-rate loans from the New Deal's Federal Housing Authority financed much of the Buckingham Community's development," according to the neighborhood conservation plan.

The now-historic garden apartments achieved local and national recognition. First lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited the expanding garden apartment complex, commenting in her daily "My Day" column: "It is a delightful development . . . well planned . . . gives one a feeling that there is a possibility of doing many things on a community basis that would make life easier for the individual family."

Yet some of the original garden apartments, which were not part of the historic district, have been torn down to make way for newer housing called the Madison at Ballston Station and Henry Wright Park at 4350 Fourth St. North, where a sign in both English and Spanish details some of the history of part of the Buckingham

garden apartment complex that once stood on the site. A nearly one-acre park with a gazebo, a playground, a drinking fountain and picnic tables opened in 2012.

Rego said he likes to take his 18-month-old daughter to nearby Lubber Run Park, located beyond the neighborhood at 200 N. Columbus St., where the Lubber Run Community Center is undergoing renovation. At the Lubber Run Amphitheater, there are summer concerts, among other activities. "We use it as our own park," said Rego, who holds both U.S. and Brazilian citizenship. The park is 30.5 acres.

In short, Buckingham is a neighborhood of contrasts, where the original garden apartments and newer townhouses and rental apartments stand side by side.

What's nearby: Shopping choices include the Buckingham Shopping Center and the former Ballston Common Mall. Except for six businesses and the Kettler Capitals IcePlex, Ballston Common is closed for redevelopment and is scheduled to reopen in fall 2018 as Ballston Quarter. Macy's, Sport & Health, Regal Cinemas, CVS, Capital One Bank and Lenscrafters are still open, according to Jill Chamberlin Fredrick, regional marketing director for Forest City Washington, the Ballston Quarter developer. The Buckingham post office is near the shopping center.

Ballston Quarter will have restaurants and other entertainment options. Already signed is Punch Bowl Social, a 25,000-

square-foot restaurant, bar and entertainment venue featuring chef Hugh Acheson, video games, shuffleboard, private karaoke rooms, bowling, ping-pong, bocce and skee-ball. Ballston Quarter also will include an open-air public plaza.

The Buckingham Shopping Center, El Paso Café and Glebe Market are all on or near North Glebe Road and North Pershing Drive. Among the restaurants there is Ravi Kabob House, a Pakistani restaurant and local favorite, Rego said.

A Harris Teeter supermarket opened in 1999 at 600 N. Glebe Rd.

Changes in the neighborhood mean different things to different people. For Bernie Berne, who has lived in the neighborhood since the late 1980s and is president of the Buckingham Community Civic Association, the biggest issue is the "destruction of the neighborhood by affordable housing." Berne, a physician and medical officer at the Food and Drug Administration, said he believes the "increase in the density" of the area "takes away open space and trees."

With only a sprinkling of single-family houses, Buckingham has one of the highest concentrations of affordable housing in Arlington County. "Their lobby is so strong," he said, referring to the affordable-housing proponents.

Living there: Buckingham is bounded roughly by North Glebe Road to the northeast, Arlington Boulevard to the south, and North Henderson Road, North

George Mason Drive and North Park Drive to the west. According to Billy Buck, president and chief executive of Buck & Associates in Arlington, 57 properties sold in the Buckingham area in the past year, ranging from a 1940 one-bedroom, one-bath condominium for \$158,000 to a five-bedroom, five-bath townhouse, built in 2013, for \$1.2 million. There are 11 properties on the market, ranging from a 1940 one-bedroom, one-bath condominium listed for \$185,000 to a five-bedroom, five-bath townhouse listed for \$1.219 million.

Schools: Nearby but outside the boundaries are Barrett Elementary, Kenmore and Swanson middle schools, and Washington-Lee High.

Transit: The closest Metro stop is Ballston on the Orange and Blue lines. Parts of Buckingham are less than a mile from those lines. A number of Metro buses, including the 22A, 22B and 22C, 10B, 23A, 23B, 23T, and 4A and 4B, stop in the neighborhood. So does the 41 Arlington Transit Bus. A number of trails and two Capital Bikeshare stations serve the area.

Crime: According to Arlington County police, in the past 12 months there were three aggravated assaults, six burglaries and five robberies reported in Buckingham.