

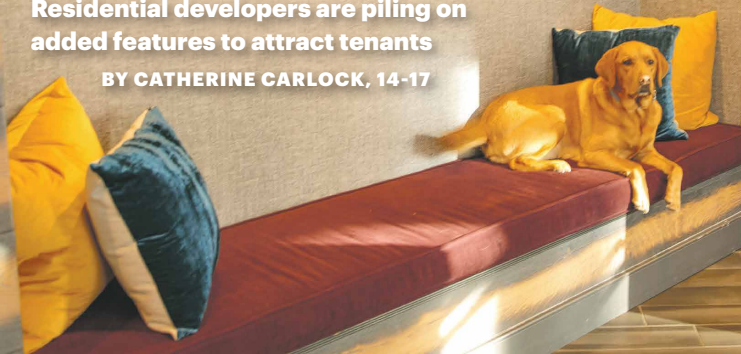


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# LAP OF LUXURY

Residential developers are piling on  
added features to attract tenants

BY CATHERINE CARLOCK, 14-17



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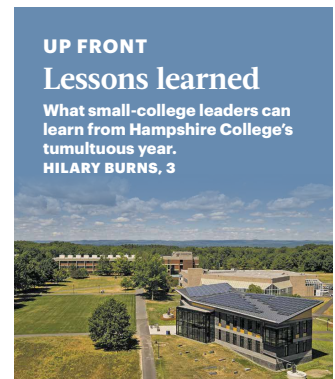
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# BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

**COVER STORY**

# HOME IS WHERE THE PERKS ARE

**Residential developers are piling on added features to attract tenants**

BY CATHERINE CARLOCK  
[ccarlock@bizjournals.com](mailto:ccarlock@bizjournals.com)

In-house grocery delivery. Smart Home tech. Dog spas, dog runs and “woof decks.”

These are all part of the growing service and amenity packages that residential developers say are crucial to attracting the modern renter, or home buyer. And as more luxury units come online in Greater Boston — and as rental rates creep ever upward — developers are ramping up the attractions to their buildings to snag the all-important lease.



- 1 A living room style lobby includes a fireplace and conveniences at the Holmes Beverly luxury apartments.
- 2 Baxter awaits a bath in the dog bathing area.
- 3 Resident dogs Tater and Oakley enjoy the snow at pet-friendly Holmes Beverly.
- 4 Resident Brooke Buckner, and her dog, Oakley, take a walk in the gated astro-turf area outside.
- 5 Holmes Beverly is adjacent to the Beverly MBTA Commuter Rail station.
- 6 Renowned chef Frank McClelland has opened his new restaurant "Frank" at Holmes Beverly.



Consider some recent examples: At Holmes Beverly, a living-room style lobby has a fireplace and package concierge and a butler's pantry with coffee and a refrigerator. A newly opened restaurant, Frank, at the building's ground level has a grab-and-go bakery for breakfast and lunch items, as well as a farm-to-table style dinner service.

At Hub50House at Boston's North Station, residents are called members of the "Hub Club," which offers VIP access to Guy Fieri's Tequila Cocina restaurant and Big Night Live entertainment. The retail tenants below the apartment tower, including the 22 restaurants and food hall, as well as the 65,000-square-foot Star Market – the city's largest urban grocery – are also incentivized to connect with residents.

New York-based Greystar Real Estate Partners LLC, a global rental housing company that's targeted Greater Boston as a prime development

area, is building out its own internal technology group to create an app that connects renters to buildings. The company aims to launch the system at a future residential tower in Back Bay, said Gary Kerr, managing director of Greystar in Greater Boston.

"The goal is, you walk into the building, and the building recognizes your phone through our proprietary app," Kerr said. "It knows you're coming upstairs – the lights are coming on. What we're trying to do is create an internet of things through this hub."

Such amenities and services have traditionally been more commonplace in multimillion-dollar luxury condos, where owners expect top service after having paid top dollar. But it's increasingly needed to lure tenants for rental apartments, developers say.

Sarah Barnat, president of Barnat Development, developed Holmes Beverly just



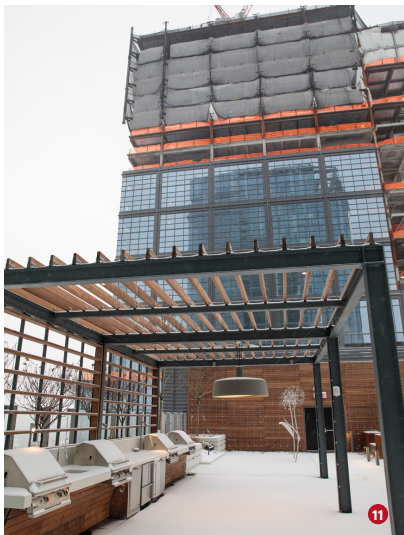
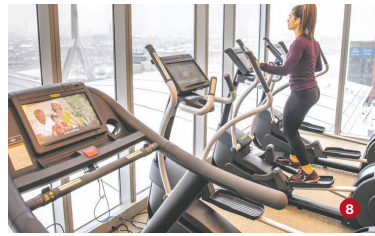
Sarah Barnat, president of Barnat Development, which developed Holmes Beverly.

steps away from the MBTA Beverly Commuter Rail station – part of Gov. Charlie Baker's Open For Business initiative that helped private developers build on publicly owned transportation land. The six-story property has attracted young families, professionals and empty nesters, Barnat said. Most of the amenities – including a roof deck, a living-room style lobby with fireplace, dog run and more – were designed to create a warm home versus a transient residence.

"People are seeking a sense of community," Barnat said. "If you can give people their private space that's efficient and very well designed, but then they can feel they're part of a larger home that has a gym and a club room where you can go and watch a football game or entertain friends, you've then expanded that residents' feeling of what their home is."

Near North Station, Hub50House opened





- 7 Robert Richard's dog, King Lion, investigates a tunnel on the heated outdoor Woof Deck at Hub50House.
- 8 A BC grad student and resident, Mary Lupoli, gets a workout in the gym at Hub50House, overlooking the Zakim Bridge.
- 9 Bacchus, owned by resident Alexis Fury, plays fetch on the Woof Deck.

around 200 units this October, and anticipated having 100 residents by the end of 2019. The balance of the building's units will open next spring. Boston hasn't built rental apartments at the rate of many other major markets, said Bryan Koop, executive vice president of the Boston region for Boston Properties. Now the city is playing catchup in many ways, both in the types of apartments available and the level of service in those properties, he said.

Koop doesn't consider the amenities Hub50House offers to be luxury. Rather, he says, "It's just smart service."

"The ability to deliver food from our food hall right up the elevator – that's just logical," Koop said. "It's part of having the connection, of having everything in one place."

Members of the "Hub Club," as residents are called, also belong to TD Garden's new "Rafters" concept, a top-level food and beverage spot at the

10 Hub50House residents have access to many restaurants and shops at The Hub, next door.

11 Leisure space with a view and a roof deck at Hub50House.

12 Wall art greets residents and dogs at the entrance to the Woof Deck.

arena with a bird's-eye view. The club also offers VIP access to Big Night Live's entertainment venue and ArcLight Cinemas.

"That's something that makes them feel extra special, but it also works for Big Night Live, because it helps drive traffic to their door," said Melissa Schrock, vice president of development for Boston Properties.

Greystar is a newcomer to the Boston development scene, with its first local property last year – Elan, a 282-unit apartment complex in Watertown. It's now planning a Back Bay tower that would charge among the highest rents in the city, particularly considering construction and land acquisition costs, said Kerr, the managing director. While he declined to specify its location, he said it will likely feature Hello Alfred, an "end to end resident experience platform" that allows residents to manage hospitality services such as

home cleaning, grocery shopping, laundry, pet care and travel planning.

Kerr said Greystar as a company plans to build out tech infrastructure that allows the highest levels of service, such as an individual unit's lights recognizing that they've entered the building to turn on. That will require a significant capital cost companywide, he said. But retaining a happy resident – or being able to keep a resident who moves to another city in another Greystar building – cuts down on turnover cost, and is a value to the company.

"It's all about making people's lives simpler. That's going to be much more valuable than adding a pool or a ping-pong table," Kerr said. "If you can simplify a person's life, that's a value to them. Modern people, our time is our biggest constraint, so our goal is to simplify everything."