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Ground broken on 249 affordable units at Squire Park

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Today, First A.M.E. Housing will break ground on its redevelopment of the Bryant Manor Apartments at 1801 E. Yesler Way. The project will see the razing of 58 aging units across six three-story buildings and the construction of 249 brand new apartments in new six- and seven-story buildings. All of the units will be affordable and for families earning at or below 60% of area median income.

The project is being completed in two phases. Phase I, which just broke ground, will demolish three of the existing buildings and replace them with a single seven-story building consisting of 101 units plus ground floor common area, office space and an early learning center. Phase II will replace the remaining buildings with a second six-story building consisting of up to 143 units plus ground floor common area amenity space.

The two buildings will share an outdoor play area and courtyard amenity space. An existing below grade parking area with 67 spaces, 13 with EV charging potential, will be retained. Current residents will have first priority in moving back to the new Phase I apartments when complete.

Phase I is expected to be completed in 2025 at which time work on Phase II would begin. The overall redevelopment should be completed by 2027. The new buildings are designed by Environmental Works Community Design Center and will be built by Compass Construction.

First A.M.E. Housing (FAME) has owned and operated Bryant Manor, historically a home and community for families of color, since its construction in 1969. In a press release FAME said its highest priorities for the redevelopment “are to combat gentrification’s effects on large families of color and to continue to offer a healthy and culturally enriching context in which to thrive.” The new development will include many large three- and four-bedroom units spread across the two buildings, with common area amenities that will support community gatherings. Units will range from studios to four bedroom.



Rendering by Environmental Works Community Design Center [\[enlarge\]](#)

A shared courtyard will sit between the two new buildings.



Image courtesy of Lotus Development Partners [\[enlarge\]](#)

The original Bryant Manor Apartments, pictured, were built with concrete using a method called the Townland system.

The development's Early Learning Center will occupy approximately 1,900 square feet of ground level space in the seven story building and will front Yesler Way. FAME is developing the center in partnership with Ashã© Community of Schools. It will provide affordable preschool access for up to 34 children each year. Funding for this component comes from the Seattle Equitable Development Initiative, the State Early Learning Fund and FAME Housing. FAME will have around 1,366 square feet of office space in the same building.

Other members of the development team include Swenson Say Faget, structural engineer; Sider + Byers, mechanical and electrical engineer and Lotus Development Partners, development manager. Financing partners for the housing include the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, the Seattle Office of Housing, Raymond James Tax Credit Fund, Umpqua Bank and Amazon through its \$2 billion national Housing Equity Fund, which supports affordable housing preservation and development.

Bryant Manor was originally developed and built as part of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Operation Breakthrough, a national demonstration program to find new technologies that could be scaled to increase housing production in urban centers. It solicited several large corporations (industrial manufacturers, chemical companies, aerospace companies and housing companies) to innovate rapid housing construction through a variety of non-traditional building and construction methods. Nine sites were built – including the site at 18th and Yesler, which was owned at the time by the City of Seattle. The original Bryant Manor was built using the Townland system which used a concrete post-tensioned “super frame” that created multiple levels of large concrete platforms. These platforms were essentially “created land” that could then be used to support modular housing units, but also streets, yards, and walkways. It was intended for use in crowded urban environments where land value was at a premium. The manufacturer of the building system for the Bryant Apartments collaborated with the Boeing Company to manage and complete the project.

First A.M.E. Church, Washington State's oldest African American church, formed the First A.M.E. Housing nonprofit in 1969 to extend its work in addressing the needs of its community. Upon completion of the site development, the city deeded the property to the nonprofit to own and operate. The building was rededicated as Bryant Manor after Harrison J. Bryant, a bishop in the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1970.

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