DURHAM COUNTY

Plans for an 18-story tower on Durham's Rigsbee Avenue just shrank. Here's the new plan.

By Kristen Johnson
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GeerHouse was completed in 2024 on the corner of Foster and West Geer streets.

Key Takeaways

- Four Points has scrapped its planned 18-story tower for GeerHouse's second phase in downtown Durham.
- The redesign replaces it with a seven-story building at 618 Foster St., linked to a second seven-story building called The Rhtyh.
- The $105 million project still needs construction drawings, permitting and financing, and isn't expected to start for at least 12 months.

Why the change?

Capital market constraints and construction costs are forcing a redesign at one of downtown

Durham's new mixed-use development projects.
Four Points, the Maryland-based developer behind the GeerHouse apartment projects, has scrapped plans for an 18-story mixed-use tower in the next phase of the development.

Instead, the second phase will be a seven-story luxury building at 618 Foster St. and will link to another building, called The Rhtyh, at 715 Rigsbee Ave.

The financial hurdles of building concrete high-rises in the current economic climate led to the pivot, according to the Triangle Business Journal (TBJ), which first reported the change.

The first phase of the GeerHouse development was completed in 2024 at 620 Foster St. The building brought 220 apartments; 13,000 square feet of new retail space, including Chef Oscar Diaz's restaurant TaTaco Durham; and a 6,200-square-foot expansion of Motorco to Foster Street.

The second phase of the GeerHouse and Four Points project originally included an 18-story tower with up to 180 apartments on Rigsbee Avenue. The building was also set to open in 2024 but was delayed.

John Sunter, the vice president of development for Four Points, said the second phase was "very expensive" given today's "restrictive financial markets."

"Since the original design approval, we acquired land adjacent to the property and designed a mid-rise building on that property that can now link seamlessly into the 618 Foster building," Sunter told The News & Observer. "The end result is a more easily financeable project with more retail, more units and more efficient parking than the original high-rise."

Sunter said renters will have access to a pool, lounges and music practice rooms.

Four Points has been buying property along West Corporation and West Geer streets for years. It has other projects underway in Durham, including Greenhouse, a 1.6-acre project at 601 N. Mangum St. That development has 268 apartment units, 8,000 square feet of retail and an on-site stormwater retention and water quality system.

What's in the Rhtyh and the 618 Foster building?

The unnamed 618 Foster St. building will be seven stories and physically linked in the middle by a parking structure to The Rhtyh, which is also seven stories tall.

In total, the entire building will have 262 apartment units.

- In the Rhtyh: 178 units (36 studios, 118 one-bedrooms, 24 two-bedrooms)
- At 618 Foster: 84 units (20 studios, 42 one-bedrooms, 22 two-bedrooms)
- Commercial space: Over 15,000 square feet of ground-floor retail facing the current GeerHouse building

According to Four Points, the Rhtyh will be for the upper end of the renter market. Submitted documents don't show how much the apartments in the new building will lease for. Currently the units at GeerHouse start at about $1,400 for a studio to over $3,000 for a two-bedroom.

The new building units will feature work-from-home layouts, floor-to-ceiling windows, sleek island kitchens and elevated finishes. The Rigsbee side will feature a two-story lobby entrance connected by a stairway to an open co-working floor and an upper level lounge, fitness area and kitchen.

Outside, there will be a courtyard, pool, grilling area, fire pits and a waterfall.

Sunter said the $105 million project still needs to go through construction drawings, permitting and financing before it can start.

"Current residents should not worry too much about the new construction, as we would not start for at least 12 months or more," Sunter said. "In the longer term the project will deliver more neighbors, more parking and more retail completing the south side of our Community Corridor linear park that we constructed with the GeerHouse project, making it a two-sided pedestrian promenade."

Kristen Johnson
The News & Observer — 919-829-4532
Kristen Johnson is a local government reporter covering Durham for The News & Observer. She previously covered Cary and western Wake County. Prior to coming home to the Triangle, she reported for The Fayetteville Observer and spent time covering politics and culture in Washington, D.C. She is an alumna of UNC at Charlotte and American University.

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