

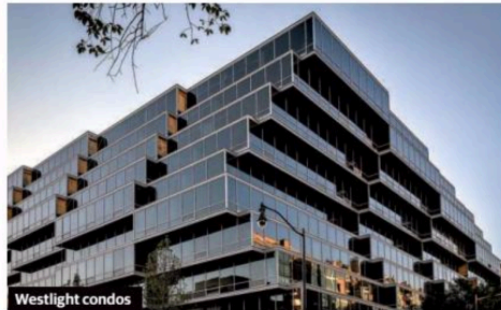
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condo living

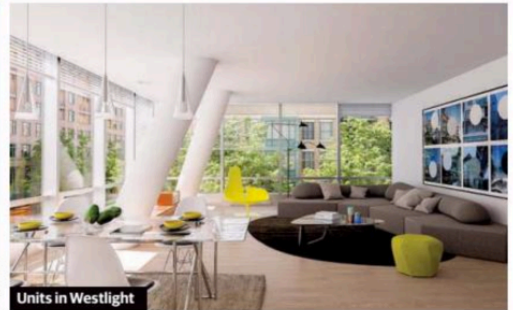


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A comprehensive new
finds global opinion of
has plummeted since
took office — and the
himself has fared even



Westlight condos



Units in Westlight



Atlantic Plumbing condos



Units in Atlantic Plumbing

THE WASHINGTON POST AND JANE BANC

Moving to the future

Increasingly, D.C. condo buyers are willing to pay more for modern home design

ARCHITECTURE

When Ditto Residential finished its most recent condo project on the 1500 block of Sixth Street NW, designed in a glassy, breezy style by Chicago-based architect Brad Lynch of firm Brininstool + Lynch, developers were stunned by how quickly buyers snapped them up.

"We had no amenities, not even parking," Ditto Residential founder Martin Ditto says. "We priced it at the top of the market, and we found buyers in 48 hours. I thought: What just happened?"

Ditto believes the tastes of buyers in the District have evolved to embrace modern architecture. The popularity of other futuristic

residential buildings, like the Atlantic Plumbing building in Shaw and the Westlight at 23rd and L streets NW, supports his theory.

"People are gravitating away from the crown molding and the traditional look," says Mei Mei Watts Venners, director of sales at Westlight, from developer EastBanc. "They want natural light, they want windows. The urban marketplace has changed."

In historic Washington, a residential development boom from the early 1900s dictates the look of much of the residential architecture. That's when prolific developer Harry Wardman built out neighborhoods such as Bloomingdale, Columbia

Getting with the times

As the modern trend marches on, some detractors exist. When D.C.-based architect Eric Colbert first presented a modern glass-and-steel design for an apartment building at 5333 Connecticut Ave. in 2013, the neighbors, most of whom lived in single-family homes, filed several lawsuits to try to stop construction. But after meeting with the area neighborhood commission several times and making a few tweaks, Colbert ultimately sold the community on the new design, and the building opened to residents in 2016. "It's an incredibly contemporary design, and we're very proud," Colbert says. S.M.

Heights and Woodley Park with hundreds of rowhouses and dozens of apartment buildings and hotels. Brick abounds.

Now that another development boom is underway, developers are starting to realize that contemporary designs are appealing to some high-end buyers more than re-creations of the past.

"We're not trying to copy what is there, because, frankly, the craftsmanship would be really difficult to copy in today's world," says Brian Coulter, a managing partner at the development firm JBG. "And we are always looking for variety."

In staying away from brick,

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Modern condos

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

architects have turned to more expensive materials, such as glass and metal. The prices reveal the cost of construction: At Atlantic Plumbing, condos ranged from the upper \$300,000s to \$1.9 million; at Westlight, from \$625,000 to \$4.4 million; and at Ditto's Sixth Street project, from \$995,000 to \$1,249,000. With the price per square foot at the top of the market, the modern units are sometimes smaller, and the abundance of light helps the spaces feel open.

Lindsay Reishman, an agent and senior vice president at Compass, brought several clients to Westlight.

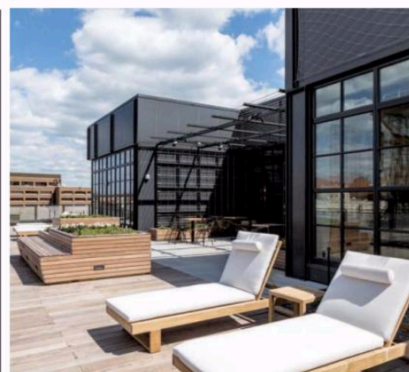
"One client was looking at the penthouse, and the price came out to \$1,500 per square foot,"

he says. "It's still not New York City or Miami, where people pay a real premium for design. But there is a willingness to pay a little bit, and it's enough to justify the effort for developers."

A few years ago, modern buildings had a harder time finding buyers to meet their higher price point. The Lacey, for example, is a glassy, modern condo project that went up on 11th Street NW in 2009. Though the design won awards, the developers needed to go through several waves of price reductions before selling all the units.

But for Amanda Skura, a resident at Atlantic Plumbing, the modern architecture was a big reason for seeking a home there.

"The light is amazing," Skura says. "I rarely have the blinds closed in the living room, and



Glass, metal and spare wood elements dominate the architecture on the rooftop deck at the Atlantic Plumbing condos in Shaw.

rarely need lighting on, even when it starts to get dark."

For Skura, living in the streamlined unit also necessitated overhauling her furnishings. Before, she was drawn to cozy, puffy "Pottery Barn-style" furniture. But in her new place, the cushy style didn't quite work. "The pieces felt so oversized," she says. Her interior designer helped her create a new collection of simple, angular pieces that complemented the strong lines of the space.

The experience inside of these modern units is a major draw, agrees JBG partner Kai Reynolds.

"We spend a lot of time thinking about looking from the inside out," Reynolds says. "It looks good from the outside, but it looks really good from the inside." SHILPA MALINOWSKI (FOR THE WASHINGTON POST)