

Real Estate

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After 60 years, a son fulfills his father's dream

■ *King's father, Arthur Toy King, bought the site in 1946 but died before he could redevelop it.*

By ANNIE MARTIN
Journal Staff Reporter

The six-story 705Weller Apartments, at Seventh and Weller in the International District, will be one of the neighborhood's first new market-rate housing projects, with 20 studios and 20 one-bedroom apartments.

It is set to open Aug. 18, after a year of construction, with lion dances and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"I think the housing will be for people who work downtown and who love the urban setting," said Ronald King of ARDA LLC, the project owner. Maria Barrientos acted as developer.



Photo by Annie Martin [\[enlarge\]](#)

Architect Ken Kubota said fitting 40 units onto the tight site at 705 Weller St. was a big challenge.

Kubota, Kato, Chin Architects was the architect and Chinn Construction was the contractor. Lorig Management Services will handle leasing and management for the King family.

King said he believes 705Weller will help broaden the diversity of residents in the Chinatown area, which is currently dominated by low-income and senior housing units. The only other market-rate housing nearby is the Uwajimaya Apartments, he said. The building also includes ground-level retail and parking for 23 cars.

The development has been a long time in coming. King's father, Arthur Toy King, emigrated from China in 1911 at age 15. He received U.S. citizenship in 1945, which allowed him to own property, so he purchased the land at Seventh and Weller the following year. Several years later he bought an adjoining parcel.

There were three houses on the site, but King said his father always wanted to develop a larger project. Arthur King died in 1973 and the properties passed on to King and his brother, Arthur D. The family wanted to fulfill Arthur's dream and agreed to build a market-rate apartment building.

"We considered putting in an office building," King said. "But we determined it would be easier

to keep residential units occupied.”

Other family members were also involved in 705Weller, including the suggestion to make the units larger than usual with high ceilings to give them a loft feeling.

“It was a risk but we wanted to be creative and give back to the community,” King said.

The building has no tenants set to move in, but King said there has been a lot of interest.

Because the property is in the International District, King had to get approval from the neighborhood preservation board. These regulations included a minimum square footage of retail, restrictions on exterior colors and having large windows on the ground level.

“It's just part of the territory working in the International District,” said architect Ken Kubota, who has previously served on the preservation board.

Kubota said the main issue with the property was its small size.

“The site is very tight and fitting 40 units was the biggest challenge,” Kubota said. Two of the dominant exterior features are octagonal-shaped bay windows and another octagon atop the corner facing Seventh and Weller. Kubota said octagons are an important symbol in Asian culture and will give the building a “lantern” look at night when the residents' lights are on.

“For years I've been wanting to work on an urban property where I could use bay windows,” Kubota said.

Kubota said the International District has become an attractive place to live in the last 10 years largely because of its proximity to downtown.

“The street life is there as well as the convenience of closeness to work, shopping, and transit.” Kubota said.

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