

The Pursuit: Dreams of a Dining Table and a Community

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Jared Powell and his agent, Jennifer Myers

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Jared Powell has been living in DC, on and off, since coming here for college in the late 90s, but it wasn't until a couple of years ago when he decided to set out in search of a home in the city.

With a Masters in urban planning and a blogroll full of development-oriented websites, Powell kept up with emerging neighborhood trends and was eager to invest in an up-and-coming area. ANC meetings, neighborhood festivals and community gardens appealed to him. "I wanted to be in an area where I could be part of a renewal," Powell said. He set his sights on Shaw, Bloomingdale and the H Street Corridor.

Neighborhood boundaries chosen, Powell set about refining his particulars.

He knew he wanted a one-bedroom condo in a smaller building with relatively few amenities. "I didn't want [a place with] a higher condo fee that would go towards an elevator or a front desk," Powell said. He wasn't interested in new construction, preferring to have a home in a building with some history, perhaps even a condo conversion in a warehouse. His dog had needs as well, so proximity to parks and gardens was a must. As with most buyers, outdoor space in the unit would be a major perk.



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McGill Row

Powell had one more requirement that made his search surprisingly difficult: he wanted a defined dining area. He didn't even need a dining *room*, just enough space to put down a real table.

Most one-bedrooms he looked at had a living room that opened to the kitchen, without the square footage for a dining area. "They would have a counter space where you could seat four people," Powell recalls. "You can't really entertain in that environment! You can't sit down and have a traditional meal."

Parameters in mind, Powell ended up looking at McGill Row, a north Bloomingdale building close to the McMillan Reservoir.

Though not a warehouse, McGill Row has an interesting history. Built as an apartment building in the 30s, the 38-unit building was purchased by developers in the mid-aughts with the intention of turning it into condos. Renovations were completed, but few sold, and the units reverted back to rentals. This year, the owners of the building decided to flip it back to condos, and have had more luck finding buyers this time around.

Powell walked through a 713-square foot one-bedroom in the building with three juliet balconies, and was drawn to the unit. He also liked the burgeoning feel of the neighborhood. "That whole retail strip has 'coming soon' in the windows," thought Powell.

Best of all, there was space for a dining table.

Powell put in an offer. Due to the particulars of the [CHIP loan](#) that Powell chose, his bank wanted to wait until a certain number of units in McGill Row had sold before closing on the mortgage. Powell waited several months, watching Bloomingdale grow rapidly and anxious to get involved.

Once McGill Row attracted enough buyers, the bank moved forward. Powell closes on the home this week.

“I’m really excited — I want to go to my ANC meetings and see what that’s all about,” he said. “Hopefully I can be a part of making that area even better.”

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