



## **Berkshire Group continues work on \$600 million The Benjamin and VIA**

January 06, 2017 - Owners Developers & Managers

Boston, MA Berkshire Group has shared details on one of the most anticipated projects of 2017: the residences at The Benjamin and VIA, two mixed-use towers in the city's Seaport District. Situated on three acres and spanning 1.5 million s/f, the \$600 million development is the largest mixed-use project in the city in over 30 years. Upon completion, The Benjamin and VIA will encompass 832 apartment homes situated atop three floors of shopping, dining and entertainment venues. Berkshire Group has partnered with Boston Global Investors to own and develop the residences at The Benjamin and VIA. WS Development develops, owns, and manages the project's retail component.

### **The Benjamin and VIA - Boston, MA**

The Benjamin and VIA are arguably Boston's most high profile developments and are cornerstones of the Seaport District, where over 20 blocks of retail, office, and residential space are coming to life.

"The Seaport District is without a doubt 'the new Boston.' Since we broke ground in 2014, the neighborhood has become all the more desirable for its innovative residential, retail, and commercial space, not to mention its free urban programming in everything from fitness to tech. Upon opening in 2017, The Benjamin and VIA will create a residential experience that greatly enhances the excitement of this neighborhood and sets a new standard for the City of Boston," said Heather Boujoulian, senior vice president and director of development investment management at Berkshire Group.

Standing at 22 and 20 stories respectively, both The Benjamin and VIA were designed by Elkus Manfredi Architects. The towers boast modern glass architecture and are being built for LEED Silver Certification. Residences have plans to include over one acre of landscaped courtyards.

Located between the buildings is Courthouse Sq., a 17,000 s/f open space that will serve as a key pedestrian link between Seaport Blvd. and Northern Ave.

Residents of The Benjamin and VIA will have a location with direct access to downtown as well as to the I-93 and I-90 interchange. Courthouse Station on the Silver Line is adjacent to

the towers, while Logan Airport and South Station are in close proximity. The Rose F. Kennedy Greenway and Financial District are less than a quarter of a mile away.

All apartments in The Benjamin and VIA are for lease only, allowing residents the freedom of flexible, mobile lifestyles. Each tower will have a distinct personality, providing a wide range of living options.

Standing at 22-stories, The Benjamin offers 354 apartments, 308 of which range from studios to penthouse suites. The Benjamin includes 46 units, ranging from studios to three-bedrooms, that meet the city of Boston's standards for affordable rent.

The first three floors of The Benjamin feature 120,000 s/f of retail curated by WS Development. With plans to offer shopping, dining, and recreation. Retail in The Benjamin currently includes The Grand, Scorpion Bar & Restaurant, and Equinox.

Combining the hospitality of a resort with first-class condo living, residents are welcomed into the building's five-star lobby by a professional door attendant and 24-hour concierge service. Residents can also enter the building and accept guests via The Benjamin's high-tech, state-of-the-art Butterfly entry system, a cloud-based video intercom that is smart phone compatible.

Catering to those who enjoy well-rounded lifestyles, The Benjamin offers ample fitness, culinary, and professional amenities across 8,000 square feet of common space. Residents will find a variety of entertainment and relaxation lounges, a catering kitchen, a private dining room, an espresso bar, an executive business center, and a fitness center with yoga and high-tech virtual programming. The Benjamin also treats all pets like VIPs with a pet amenity area, spa and services.

Maximizing its prime location and dramatic views, The Benjamin offers two distinct outdoor terraces overlooking the Seaport and situated on the fourth floor. The spacious 12,000 square foot Pool Terrace boasts a south-facing courtyard with spectacular views of Seaport Boulevard and downtown Boston. Lush landscaping and outdoor grills accent the pool and sundeck. On the Garden Terrace, which is 11,026 square feet, residents can relax under the custom wood arbor, warm up next to the firetable, or take in the views of Fort Point Channel, Rows Wharf, and the Boston skyline.

Like the outdoor terraces, The Benjamin's residences enjoy the best views in the city. Apartments facing West and South overlook the bustle of Seaport Boulevard, Fort Point Channel, and the Blue Hills, while homes facing to the North and East enjoy views of iconic Boston landmarks: Rows Wharf, The Custom House Tower, and Boston Harbor.

Apartment homes in The Benjamin are elegantly appointed with high-end finishes. Highlights include wood flooring, Caesarstone countertops, under mount sinks, Grohe faucets, modern cabinets, GE and Bosch appliances, spa inspired bath designs, Nest thermostats, custom designed millwork, and recessed, energy efficiency LED lighting.

The penthouse suites in The Benjamin, situated on floors 17 through 22, offer ultra luxurious finishes with breathtaking harbor and city views. Suites range from studios to three-bedroom units and provide maximum privacy with exclusive elevator access to their respective floors. Interior highlights include dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows, Nest thermostats, GE and Bosch appliances, induction cooktops, boutique-style custom closet systems, and travertine baths. Select apartments also offer private balconies, ranging from 10-40 feet wide.

In addition to underground parking, and in an effort to place environmentally conscious living at the forefront, The Benjamin offers car-charging stations, spaces for car sharing, and a host of bicycle amenities, including storage, repair, and bike shares. The building will also be smoke-free, use environmentally safe cleaning supplies, and incorporate waste efficiencies.

VIA is 20 stories and offers a mix of 478 apartment homes. 382 apartments are available as studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, and three-bedrooms; 50 of these units meet the city of Boston's standards for affordable rent. The Fusion Wing has 96 units with studio and one-bedroom floor plans.

The first three floors of VIA, curated by WS Development, offer 130,000 s/f of retail space and will include original shopping, dining, recreation and entertainment. Confirmed retail in VIA currently includes STK, Kings Bowl, Showcase Icon Theater, and Tuscan Italian Kitchen and Market.

Further details on VIA will be shared in the coming months.

The Benjamin and VIA uniquely represent the highest concentration of retail space in the Seaport District with a total of 250,000 square feet devoted to shopping, dining, fitness, and entertainment. WS Development, a locally based and privately led real estate firm, will develop, own, and manage the retail in each tower. Further details are as follows; additional announcements will be made in the future.

Equinox: Found within The Benjamin, this high performance fitness and lifestyle leader has developed a brand that represents service, value, quality, expertise, and innovation. Providing a holistic approach to fitness, Equinox offers an integrated selection of Equinox-branded programs, services and products, including strength and cardio training, group fitness classes,

personal training, spa services, products, apparel, and food/juice bars.

**The Grand and Scorpion Bar & Restaurant:** Boston nightlife impresarios Big Night Entertainment Group (BNEG) will own and operate The Grand and Scorpion Bar & Restaurant, spanning 21,930 s/f within The Benjamin. Scorpion Bar & Restaurant will offer a traditional Mexican tequila cantina experience with the attitude of a rock bar. The Grand will be an 11,000 s/f space serving as both a destination nightclub and a 600-person private event space during the week.

**ShowPlace ICON Theater:** Owned by Kerasotes Showplace Theatres, ShowPlace ICON Theatre will be the newest location in the company's 100+ year history. It will be located within VIA and will immerse guests in luxury with sophisticated décor, 10 auditoriums, and just 860 seats to provide an intimate cinema experience. All auditoriums will have cutting-edge technology for both sight and sound, wall-to-wall screens, and plush recliner seating for ultimate comfort. Seating will be reserved so moviegoers will never face the uncertainty of ticket availability or having just the right seat. There will be no ticket lines as guests will be able to download tickets on their smart devices via the Showplace ICON app. The theatre will also contain the Lobby Lounge, a chic restaurant with a full bar, seating for up to 175 guests, and dramatic views of downtown Boston.

**Kings Bowl:** Located within VIA, this locally grown Boston business rekindles the fun and escape of bowling with a memorable entertainment experience emphasizing homemade food, cold beer, creative cocktails, and great music. Kings Bowl will feature Private Bowling Rooms, Billiards, Shuffleboard, Air Hockey, and other fun and interactive games. Upscale, retro-inspired décor and executive-chef designed menus are brought to life by Kings' "best-in-industry" service. With varied entertainment options, theme nights and audio-visual equipment, Kings sets itself apart as an unparalleled social scene for all occasions.

**STK:** STK is a popular, high-energy steakhouse concept by The One Group. Opening within VIA, STK offers a modern twist on the American steakhouse with an infectious vibe, lounge, and live DJ.

**Tuscan Italian Kitchen and Market:** This classic New England brand will open a 320-seat artisan Italian restaurant and marketplace concept within VIA, serving made from scratch Italian cuisine, including thin-crust Neapolitan pizza. The 14,500 s/f restaurant will also boast a marketplace that sells bread, cheese, gelato, and imported Italian goods.

The Benjamin is located at 25 Northern Ave. and VIA is located at 5 Fan Pier Blvd.

Berkshire Group is a real estate investment management company primarily known for its

multifamily investment and operational experience. In addition to deploying capital through equity, debt and development in the multifamily arena, Berkshire invests in opportunistic ventures in other real estate sectors through its Venture Investments group. Over more than four decades, Berkshire's team of industry leaders has gained a reputation for being able to identify opportunities and effectively manage through various economic environments, establishing a long-term track record of solid performance based on thoughtful, leading edge strategies, and operational experience. The company has experience in disciplines including acquisitions, portfolio and property management, debt, development and redevelopment. Berkshire, a registered investment advisor, is headquartered in Boston and has offices in Atlanta, New York, Baltimore, Dallas, Houston and San Francisco. As of June 30, 2016, Berkshire Group had \$7.2 billion in real estate assets under management.

Boston Global Investors (BGI) is a leading real estate development and consulting firm headquartered in Boston. Led by John Hynes III and a team of experienced real estate professionals, BGI has over 30 years of experience developing commercial, residential and mixed-use projects from landmark towers to city-scale development. Current projects include The Benjamin & VIA in Boston's Seaport, and the redevelopment of United Technology Corporation's 47-acre Rocketdyne facility within LA Warner Center in Los Angeles. BGI was also a major shareholder and co-founder along with Gale International in the New Songdo City project in South Korea, a \$35 billion, 100 million s/f master planned city. Prior to forming BGI, Mr. Hynes developed the 1.1 million s/f State Street Financial Center tower, the 500,000 s/f 101 Arch St. tower in Boston, and the 500,000 s/f MITC Center in Chelsea, Mass.

WS Development is a Massachusetts-based property developer dedicated to the creation of places where people want to be. With more than 20 million s/f of existing space and an additional four million under development, it is one of the largest privately-owned development firms in the country. In business since 1990, WS is a vertically-integrated company that develops, owns, operates, and leases over 90 properties, including urban buildings, lifestyle centers, power centers, community centers, and mixed-use developments. Its goal is to be a contributing member of each community it serves. WS takes pride in its commitment to its roots, reflected by its properties in and around New England, but also finds great satisfaction in immersing itself in new locales and expanding its national portfolio.