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THE BUSINESS OF LIFE

**Dated complex gets modern makeover**

By Stan Bullard



Photo by STAN BULLARD

Many people talk about how they hate mansard roofs. Even when they first became widespread atop new commercial buildings in a revival of the style in the 1970s, people talked about disliking mansard roofs, especially when they were clad in roofing shingles.

However, BurtonCarol Management is doing something about its mansard roofs at its Great Northern Village apartments, 5272 Victoria Lane in North Olmsted. It's removing the shingle-covered roofs that sweep down over the second floor of the 1974-vintage complex. The removal is no simple operation, in part because there are 15 buildings with a total of 116 apartments.



Photo by STAN BULLARD Taking the mansards out of mansard roofs on a North Olmsted apartment complex was no small undertaking.

### **In building terms, it's almost brain surgery**

The Warrensville Heights-based apartment ownership and management firm did not start out to perform a mansard-otomy.

Joy Anzalone, BurtonCarol chief operating officer, said the company sought to replace old roofs atop the buildings. With mansard roofs, the top is a shallow angle, and they move into a steep-angle astride the building. There also were problems with the trusses that support the droopy roofs in a style created in France that was first popular in the United States from 1860 to 1900. (An example of a mansard roof at its best is at the onetime University Club Building, at 3813 Euclid Ave. in Cleveland.)

“We wanted a transformation of the property,” Anzalone said of Great Northern Village. “We wanted to do new roofs — and we couldn't do them without dealing with the mansards.”

The scope of the work was so great that, instead of a roofing contractor, BurtonCarol had to hire general contractor Nyman Construction Co. of Cleveland to oversee the project. The job requires removing the existing roofs, then replacing the roof and installing new walls on the second floor. An average of 30 workers labored daily on the project last summer, according to Ken Murphy, a Nyman vice president.

The work also included rebuilding the exterior second-floor walls, installing decorative cornices as well as replacing windows and doors. Hallways and common areas are being updated, along with some of the units.

Rob Risman, president and CEO of BurtonCarol, and Anzalone put the budget for the updates at more than \$1 million.

“I'm rebuilding a complex that my father (Bill Risman) built,” Rob Risman said. “It's a wonderful location.”

The investment is worthwhile, he said, because the property benefits from its location near Great Northern Mall and public transportation. Occupancy remains about 95% at the property, where rents range from \$690 to as much as \$850, depending on the unit's size, makeup and location.

“Tenants were worried we wanted to raise rents after this, but that's not the case,” Anzalone said.

“However, we worried that it looked so dated that prospective tenants would drive by and not consider it.”



Photo by STAN BULLARD Great Northern Village in North Olmsted sports the look of a much newer multifamily development after the mansard roofs in the neighborhood were removed.

### **A fresh face for the future**

The results are striking, given the former appearance of the complex.

The completed buildings now look almost identical to just-completed suburban multifamily projects.

Maygon Carter, Great Northern Village's property manager, said she has received compliments on the change in the appearance, including when shopping nearby.

Trish Gibeaut, who has lived in the complex for seven years, said she did not mind the mansard roofs, but added, “What they're doing looks good.”

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