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Site of former Heights tortilla factory sold to developer for future apartments

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A 2-acre strip of land in the Heights where a tortilla factory once ran will soon be cleared to make way for a new eight-story apartment building.

Phoenix-based Alliance Residential bought the site of the former La Espiga de Oro factory Sept. 26, said [Luke Phillippi](#), development director. He plans to break ground on the project off 15th Street and North Shepherd within the next 30 days.

Alliance bought the roughly 2-acre tract from Lira Real Estate Inc. In 2017, the company's president, Alfredo Lira, along with his wife, daughter and a night manager, pleaded guilty to hiring undocumented workers at the factory between 2011 and 2015. The company forfeited \$1 million and paid a separate \$85,360 to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for safety violations, [a 2017 press release from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)



ALVIN GEE

Luke Phillippi, development director with Alliance Residential, told HBJ his company closed on a 2-acre tract of land near the corner of 15th Street and North Shepherd in the Heights, where an old tortilla factory used to be.

stated. Phillippi said this didn't impact the sale in any way, adding that it was a typical land transaction.

Alliance's 337-unit apartment building will feature Spanish and Mediterranean architecture elements, Phillippi said. Apartments will range in size from about 600 to 1,200 square feet, with rental rates likely starting around \$1,400 and going up to \$2,400. The building's amenities — including a pool, grilling stations, fire pit and outdoor pizza oven — will be on the top floor of the parking garage.

Houston-based EDI International designed the building, and Alliance is serving as its own general contractor. The project's construction loan will be through JPMorgan Chase & Co. Tom Dosch with Houston-based Dosch Marshall Real Estate, a land brokerage firm, represented Alliance Residential, while Frank Yeverino with the law firm The FRY Firm represented Lira Real Estate.

The yet-to-be-named apartments will be close to the "dead center of the Heights," within walking distance to Atlanta-based chef [Ford Fry's new restaurants Superica and La Lucha](#) as well as across the street from Heights Biergarten and steps away from the planned [Market at Houston Heights](#). A \$3.15 million building permit for the Market at Houston Heights retail development was recently filed with the city of Houston by Randolph Wile, president of the Houston-based investment firm Wile Interests Inc.

Alliance has a handful of other developments in the works in the Heights and Washington Avenue neighborhoods, including its [Heights Waterworks](#), [Broadstone Studemont](#) and [Sawyer Yards](#) projects.

Developers have proposed [at least six different apartment projects](#), totaling 1,666 units, for the Heights/Washington Avenue submarket, according to an analysis from ApartmentData.com.

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