A Look Inside Sawtelle Japantown’s Osaka Residences

Area is seeing an influx of vertical development

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Developers are building up, not out, in Sawtelle Japantown, a trend that is extending from multifamily projects to single-family homes.

Resident and developer David Owen Taylor’s two detached three-story homes at 11320 and 11322 La Grange Avenue, completed last month, recently hit the market for $2.1 and $2.2 million. They fit in with the barrage of new multifamily developments more than they do the one-story houses of the area’s past.
The design of Osaka Residences points to a shift toward density in the newly-dubbed West Los Angeles neighborhood, which the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously to name in April 2015. Taylor’s two detached three-bedroom homes are each roughly 2,700 square feet. That includes their rooftop decks, a feature more common in the multifamily market. They have glass walls, open floor plans, Douglas Fir ceilings, hardwood floors, and marble baths.

“Zen landscape punctuated by specimen trees and handsome hardscape envelop the striking exteriors,” the website for the properties says.

Andres Cardenas was the architect on the project and John Kwan was the contractor. They are both Sawtelle residents. Gibson International is the listing agent.

Multifamily developers have recently swarmed the area. There are nine projects in various stages of development on Sawtelle Boulevard alone, all of which are significantly taller than older homes in the area.

One developer is responsible for a lot of the build up. Wellesley Manor Corp., a Sawtelle-based developer which built a 94-unit mixed-use building in the neighborhood in 2006 and a 55-unit condominium complex in 2009, has several new developments planned. The firm, helmed by Peter Wilson, is close to finishing Camden Town at 1750 Sawtelle Boulevard, a 15-unit rental apartment development, and is building a 52-unit apartment complex at 1900 Sawtelle Boulevard. Wellesley is also building a five-story 25-unit residential building at 1854 Sawtelle Boulevard called Regents Park, which will have 650 square feet of commercial space.
There are a handful of other developers building big in the area too, like Nayssan Properties, which is developing a 56-foot tall apartment complex called Sawtelle Terraces.

Before it was officially named, Sawtelle Japantown was known as "Little Osaka." Its Japanese American residents, who arrived in the early 1900s, were sent to internment camps during World War II, but many returned afterwards. In recent years, the area has attracted the young and hip, though a lot of its staple Japanese eateries and stores still exist.

The borders of Sawtelle Japantown run from Santa Monica Boulevard to Pico Boulevard between the 405 and Centinela Boulevard.

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