

Kearny Mesa development: Alive and very well

By Alan Nevin

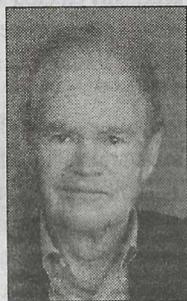
Kearny Mesa is not an area that typically attracts a lot of attention in the press. It is a community planning area within the city of San Diego; a community of 10,000 people predominantly known for its aerospace-related employment base. It also is the home of Montgomery Field, one of the nation's oldest (opened in 1940) and busiest small airports, sited on 450 acres.

Kearny Mesa is one of the three major employment centers in San Diego County (along with downtown and Sorrento Valley) and has approximately 125,000 jobs.

Its boundaries are State Route 52 on the north, Interstate 805 on the west, I-15 on the east and Aero Drive on the south.

The major north-south artery is Convoy Street, now a "district" of the city of San Diego (Convoy Pan Asian Cultural and Business Innovation District). It is home to more than 200 restaurants (mostly Asian), more than 40 automobile dealerships (new and used) and numerous Asian markets. The auto dealerships range from purveyors of klunkers to Ferraris.

Development activity in Kearny Mesa has been sparse in recent years, but it is now in the midst of a multifamily property boom. Taking the lead is the developer Trammel Crow. It acquired the vacated Dixieline store and is near the completion of a JWDA Architects-designed



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six story, 531-unit apartment project known as "Camellia."

Nearby, the housing developer T.B. Pennick is underway with a 251-unit Ion Convoy apartment project. It is owned by AAA Management and will be completed early next year.

A block away from the Ion Convoy project is a massive 432-unit apartment project by Alliance Development, designed by AO Architects. It is about a year from completion.

Immediately south of Montgomery Field at Aero Drive and Aero Court is AMLI's 434-unit, seven-story AMLI Aero apartment project, which is now nearing completion, and AAA's Ion Aero complex with 302 units.

The largest of the planned apartment projects in the Convoy District is on land now owned by G.H. Palmer at the corner of Convoy and Clairemont Mesa Boulevard (the old bowling alley). That project is scheduled for 1,650 units.

Fortunately, there will be a sufficient number of new jobs to expand the market for rental housing. Many, if not most, of those jobs will relate to the expansion of Sharp Hospital and Rady Children's Hospital and their surrounding facilities.

Sharp Hospital currently has 6,800 nurses and 655 beds. It recently celebrated the first birthday of the \$75 million Sharp Prebys Innovation and Education Center. The Prebys Center includes a technology demonstration, the Cox Technology Immersion Lab and Castor Institute for Nursing Excellence, the Brown Simulation Center, and a 375-seat auditorium and conference center.

A former patient, Kevin Cook, funded the

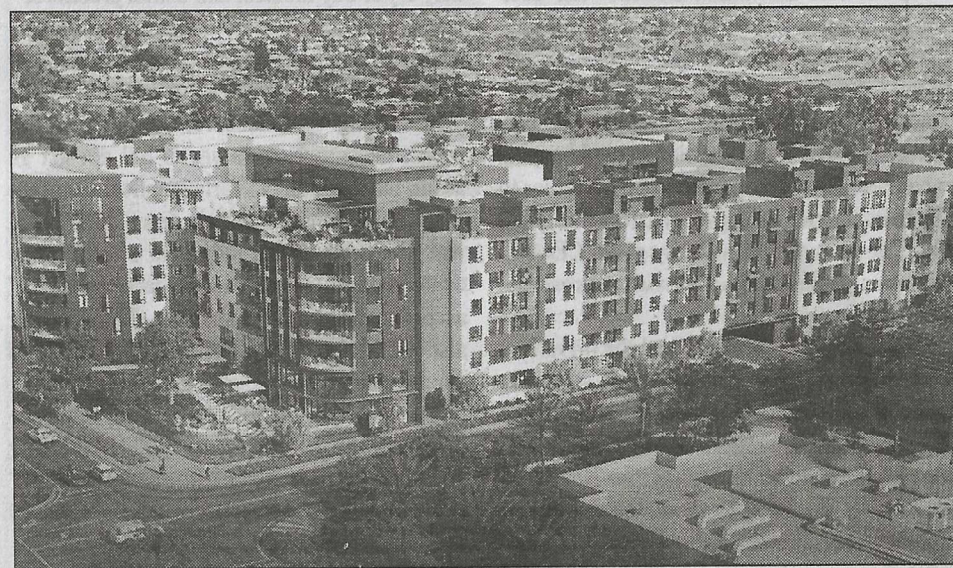


Image courtesy of AMLI

A rendering of the 434-unit apartment complex being built by AMLI Residential in Kearny Mesa. It is one of a number of projects in the central part of the county.

Kevin H Cook Infusion Center and has recently funded a garage.

In addition, the Sharp complex includes the Mary Birch Hospital for Women.

During the next decade, Sharp is investing \$2 billion in new facilities.

Next door to Sharp is Rady's Children's Hospital, one of the top 10 rated children's hospitals in the nation. Every year they admit almost 300,000 children.

A seven-story, 500,000-square-foot pavilion is now under construction. It will house an expanded emergency department and intensive care units. Part of the 1950-era existing structure will be demolished to make way for

the new pavilion. The pavilion is scheduled to open in 2027.

On balance, in the coming year, more than 6,500 apartment units will join the San Diego urban inventory of new upscale multifamily housing units. The 2,000 units in Kearny Mesa will join 2,600 apartment units in Bankers' Hill/Hillcrest and another 2,000 units downtown in a scramble for residents who can qualify to live in increasingly desirable urban neighborhoods. The race is on.

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