Apartment investor expanding in Chicago

By STEVEN R. STRAHLER
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851 W. Grand Ave.

Waypoint Residential made its first Chicago acquisition in 2015 with a six-story, 36-unit apartment project under development in the Fulton River District at 851 W. Grand Ave.

Now the Stamford, Conn.-based investment firm, which focuses on multifamily units and student housing, mainly in the Southeast, says it wants to do more deals here and around the Midwest.

It added Daniel Price to its two-person local office as vice president of acquisitions to oversee the regional expansion. Ed Ryder, Waypoint's national head of acquisitions and a senior managing director, also works out of the Chicago office, the firm says.

Price, 30, was at Waterton, a Chicago-based investor in and manager of apartment and hospitality properties.

CEO Scott Lawlor says Waypoint plans to hire more people in Chicago and isn't losing its appetite for additional holdings, despite the real estate recovery's lengthy duration.

"We get asked that a lot. My view is, it's not possible to forecast (the real estate cycle) with any degree of confidence," he said. "However, if you look at it from a financial or economic perspective, instead of a chronological perspective, we're not deep at all. In fact, we're early to mid."

Waypoint says it has acquired 22,000 units worth $2.2 billion since its 2011 founding.

In an investor call last November Lawlor said Waypoint began adding development expertise to an acquisition-only shop to take advantage of "structural tailwinds" in rental housing. Chief Investment Officer Eric Hade said Waypoint plans to deliver six projects this year.

"The apartment sector is a lower-beta sector," Lawlor said. "We're simply less exposed than an office building. The risk at the margin is not nearly the same. . . .We're not high-fivin', but we're not losing sleep, either."

http://www.chicagobusiness.com/realestate/20170327/CRED03/170329934/waypoint-residential-expanding-in-chicago