

# Pet-friendly O'Fallon, Ill., apartments built with a 'big house' concept

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The Parkway Lakeside Apartment Homes complex and its man-made lake at O'Fallon, Ill.

**O'FALLON, Ill.** • When St. Louis-based Balke Brown Transwestern undertook developing a 232-unit Parkway Lakeside project, it decided a couple of years ago that it would use a "big house" concept to make the apartments feel like home.

Under that plan, each apartment unit has its own exterior entrance, and the 21 two-story apartment buildings in the complex were designed to look like the large modern houses in nearby subdivisions.

"There needed to be something that was customized for the renter who is looking today," said Deanna Haas, vice president for residential management at Balke Brown.

"Parkway Lakeside standards are very high," she said. "We really wanted to create a sense of community and make our residents feel at home. Our vision was to make Parkway a 'want to live here' rather than a 'have to live here' community."

In line with making the apartments look more like houses, the rental rates at the complex are on the upper end for the Metro East area at \$945 to \$1,800 a month.

Those prices haven't been a major deterrent for renters, Haas said. The units had an occupancy rate this month of nearly 75 percent, just a year after the first units were opened, she added.

The 1,012 average square footage of the apartment units rivals that of many smaller houses and makes renting the units a reasonable alternative to the worries of home ownership, she said.

The \$29 million Parkway Lakeside complex, on Boulder Creek Drive off Frank Scott Parkway and east of Green Mount Road, has attracted many young professionals as well as officers from nearby Scott Air Force Base, Haas said.

The complex offered many amenities for its residents such as valet chauffeur services, onsite pet spa and groomer, two outdoor dog parks, picnic pavilions near the man-made lake, swimming pool, clubhouse and exercise room.

Drive-in garage parking is provided for 120 cars, with additional reserved surface parking.

Each apartment has granite countertops and GE Cleansteel appliances in kitchens, full-size washers/dryers and 9-foot ceilings. Some have private patios and windows overlooking the lake.

The complex covers about 20 acres, and has a large amount of green space between buildings, Haas said.

The apartments also have one or two bedrooms and large walk-in closets.

A licensed pet groomer staffs the pet spa once a week. "We considered the pet amenities in developing the project," Haas said. "That is a deciding factor for many people on whether to rent or not."

Parkway Lakeside now hosts "Bark in the Park" socials for its pet owners. The complex also hosts Pet Adoption Days in conjunction with the O'Fallon Humane Society.

The project, which opened its first units in May 2011, was financed by the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust including a \$26.1 million FHA-insured taxable construction and permanent mortgage loan secured with a Ginnie Mae mortgage-backed security. The general contractor was Swansea-based Holland Construction Services Inc.

More information is available at [www.liveparkway.com](http://www.liveparkway.com) or by calling 618-628-6989.