

WASHINGTON

The Rules of Washington Real Estate

*The Region's Newest Sales Tool:***VIRTUAL REALITY**

In our competitive market, it's not unusual for eager condo-hunters to buy "pre-construction"—i.e., before the building is even done. Typically, this involves agreeing to put a contract on a unit based on looking at renderings and blueprints. More and more, though, buying pre-construction involves virtual reality.

At the Westlight condos going up in DC's West End, developer EastBanc lets you try on virtual-reality goggles that make you feel as if you're inside various parts of the building, including the lobby, the rooftop pool deck, and one of the condos. Other builders use YouTube's 360-degree video service: While standing in the construction site, you hold up the phone, pan around, and the finished version of whatever area the phone is trained on immediately appears on its screen. It feels like magic—or at least an impressive sales tactic.

