

# Millennials Love Home Automation: 985 High at The Castle Columbus, Ohio

To deliver a seamless internet experience, 985 High at The Castle capitalized on the opportunity to provide buildingwide Wi-Fi and home automation. Our thanks to Kaileigh Steiner, director of marketing and community engagement for BORROR, and John Casadonte, senior product marketing manager for American Tower, for helping gather information for this profile.

By Sean Buckley / *Broadband Communities*

**T**he state capital and the most populous city in Ohio with 879,170 residents, Columbus has become an attractive location for businesses and young professionals alike. In 2016, Money magazine ranked Columbus as one of the six best big U.S. cities, citing a “highly educated workforce and wage growth.”

Columbus’s historic district is now home to 985 High at The Castle, a mixed-use property that includes 105 apartment units, offices and retail. Retail space is located on the first floor, commercial space takes up the second floor, and floors three through eight are residential.

To appeal to the millennial population, 985 High’s developer, BORROR, tasked American Tower with installing Wi-Fi connectivity throughout the building. BORROR was concerned about more than moving raw data – the platform also supports home automation services such as remote door locks.

Kaileigh Steiner, director of marketing and community engagement for BORROR, says connectivity and automation are provided as high-tech amenities that differentiate the property.

“We have our really fast, high-speed Wi-Fi,” Steiner says. “For our corporate office, we have Magnum Innovations [building automation solution], so we

have temperature-adjusted lights and occupancy centers. We also use Control4 as our smart-home solution.”

BORROR, which has its corporate offices on the second floor of 985 High, enjoys the automation amenities and video calling. The building’s access system includes ButterflyMX video call boxes, which provide views of the location’s entrances from the garage and a main entrance in the front. For guest entry, the building has a virtual concierge, which allows residents to give guests access remotely after confirming via video camera.

“It was exciting to experience that video calling capability,” Steiner says. “With our corporate offices on the second floor, our corporate team has been able to experience all the technology offerings.”

John Casadonte, senior product marketing manager for American Tower, says the 985 High building was



A high-tech oasis in a historic district: 985 High at The Castle leverages building and home automation.

designed to accommodate millennials’ desire to access over-the-top content.

“The key thing with BORROR is they are thinking ahead of the game and are largely targeting millennials,” Casadonte says.

These technologies are just the tip of 985 High’s ambitions. Working with American Tower, BORROR is preparing its buildings to handle future 5G wireless services.

BORROR and American Tower are hardly strangers. Previously, American Tower equipped 303, another Columbus-area building.

“985 High is the second property we worked with American Tower on in Columbus for internet access,” Steiner says. “The other is downtown in the River South district. American Tower partnered with Epproach, which controlled the service and worked directly with us for our residents.”

Steiner adds that in the near term, American Tower’s internet service at

both of its Columbus locations gives it “the ability to use smart apartments – something that we know is coming in the near future in our markets.”

For the next stage of its automation drive, BORROR is equipping the units with smart locks. “We have Schlage locks,” Steiner explains. “We’re trying to get those integrated so we can use Bluetooth capabilities on those.”

The fitness center is high-tech, too. “We have a fitness center with a virtual

on-demand fitness class program that includes 300-plus classes you can select from,” Steiner says. “There’s an iPad on the wall where people select the classes, a big TV and a traditional cardio room.”

Given the property’s location, the building appeals to a younger crowd that enjoys city nightlife. “We’re in the Short North, which is a very hip neighborhood,” Steiner says. “There are lots of bars and restaurants, and it’s growing rapidly.”

### PROPERTY OF THE MONTH HIGHLIGHTS ~ 985 High at The Castle, Columbus, Ohio ~

- Mixed-use property that includes 105 apartment units, office and retail.
- 200 Mbps in-building Wi-Fi connectivity via agreement with American Tower.
- Virtual concierge and guest entry system.
- Security and fob key access for each floor.

# PROPERTY OF THE MONTH



Residents at 985 High stay logged into their secure, private networks even in the common areas.

The views are also compelling. “We’re one of the taller buildings in this area,” Steiner says. “The views from the rooftop deck and even from any of the units are pretty spectacular, given that most of the buildings in Columbus are usually five stories, and we’re eight stories.”

## VITAL STATISTICS

**Property Description:** 985 High at The Castle, located at the corner of W. 2nd Avenue and High Street in historic downtown Columbus, includes 11,000 square feet of retail, 12,000 square feet of class A office space, a 210-space public parking garage and 105 high-end luxury apartments with top-of-the-line finishes. This mixed-use, eight-story building is an icon on High Street.

The building has studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments from 400 to 1,764 square feet. The Castle is a joint venture between BORROR, White Castle and the city of Columbus. BORROR worked closely with the Columbus Development Department to bring a public parking garage to this vibrant area of the city.

**Demographics:** Young professionals

**Greenfield or retrofit?** Greenfield

**Number of units:** 105

**Style:** Mid-rise

**Date services started being delivered:** 2018

**Special Requirements:** Integration of smart-home applications

## SERVICES

**Services offered or planned on the network:** High-speed internet access with a top speed of 200 Mbps, burstable to 250 Mbps symmetrical. Residents also can use other Wi-Fi-based services, including Wi-Fi calling, if it’s available on their handsets, and common-area wireless. In addition, home automation services, such as building/home

monitoring and control and remote door lock control, are available.

**Provider:** American Tower provides Wi-Fi connectivity to residential tenants.

**Do additional service providers operate separate broadband networks on the same property?** No

**Technical support:** A white-label concierge service offers residents help-desk support; American Tower provides Tier 2 and Tier 3 technical support.

## BUSINESS

**Which parts of the network are owned by the service provider, and which parts are owned by the property?** All parts of the network are owned by the property.

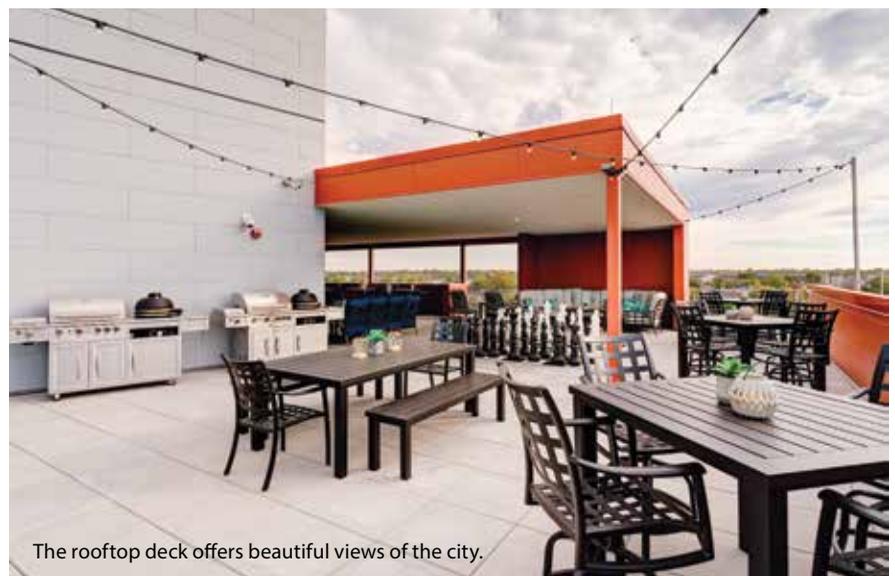
**How are services sold?** Services are provided as a standard amenity to every resident, incorporated into the rental fee.

**Benefits of the network:** The property owner markets the Wi-Fi service as part of its “smart in-home” amenity.

## TECHNOLOGY

**Architecture:** Fiber to the building and floor

**Where is the fiber terminated?** In the equipment closet on each floor



The rooftop deck offers beautiful views of the city.

**Technology/medium used to deliver signals to each unit:** Cat 6A cabling and 802.11ac Wi-Fi access points

**Vendors/products:**

- ButterflyMX: Video call boxes
- Control4: Smart-home automation systems
- Magnum Innovations: Energy management solutions
- Schlage: Smart locks
- WhiteSpace Building Technology Advisors: Smart-building technology design and implementation services

**LESSONS LEARNED**

*Answers by Kaileigh Steiner, BORROR*

**What was the biggest challenge?** We really wanted to have connectivity throughout the building so users could travel on their own unit networks to all common spaces. This was a change for the team we worked with to install the Wi-Fi. It was something important to us, and American Tower did a great job working with us to make that happen. It's important to renters that if the property owner supplies the network, it has to be safe and secure. One way to do that is to tell residents they can travel anywhere in the building and stay on their private network.

**What was the biggest success?** From a sales perspective, our biggest success is being able to offer something better than what residents could obtain on their own by providing faster speeds and better capability. That's the direction the market is moving in, but many of our competitors don't provide that. It's a value-add to be able to offer such high speeds at such a reasonable price.

**What was done – and what could have been done better – to limit disruption?** No one occupied the building at the time the network was deployed. We were offering service to new residents moving into new construction. We were able to get everything up and online before

we had to give information out. We streamlined the process and said, "When you're ready to move in, here's your login information. and you're good to go."

Being able to provide all the welcome and login information the day our first resident moved in was a huge success for us. It took away the stresses of moving. Typically, people must schedule times to get their utilities set up. Nowadays, people don't like to live without Wi-Fi for more than five minutes or lose a day to schedule someone to set it up. I think it's a big deal for us and our residents.

**What feedback does the leasing office get from residents?** I think it's a good thing that we don't hear much about it. That means it's working well. It's one of those things that's amazing to have but not necessarily something you hear about until something goes wrong.

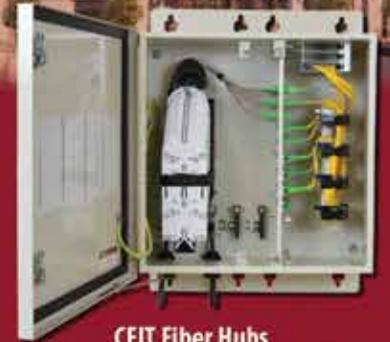
For us to *not* hear from our residents about the Wi-Fi service is the biggest win for us because it's all seamless. When you think about subscribing to Wi-Fi or any internet service, you call them only when your service is out. You don't call them to say the service is awesome.

**What should other owners consider before they get started on a similar deployment?** It's a matter of considering it as a value-add for residents. For us and our residents, it is. Considering the world that we live in, people have concerns about the safety and privacy of their information. Owners want to make sure it's something that their residents will appreciate. It's important for owners to fully understand what first-class internet service will do for a property. In a building like 985 High, it's very important to ensure that everyone can get great service with their Wi-Fi internet. ❖

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