

LAND PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

By Drew Romanic, AIA, The Martin Architectural Group

Ridge Farms Townhomes over Flats offers traditional neighborhood design

As part of the South Whitehall Pennsylvania Township Comprehensive Plan approved in 2009, The Ridge, a mixed-use project in the Township incorporates many different housing options to add smart growth in the area. This comprehensive plan provides guidelines for the development of these growth areas to include “vil-



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lage style” mixed-use, created as walkable communities. By preserving open space and developing vertical residential living, some over retail and professional services – the “village style” walkable elements will provide an identity and sense of community anchoring the project. With St. Luke’s Medical Center as one of the main tenants for the mixed-use component, there is a strong foundation for a great combination of restaurants and service providers. The planned open spaces in the village center will give



The Ridge

plenty of space for community gatherings and events for all to participate. The Ridge incorporates many different housing options for the growing area. Several products, being developed by The Martin Architectural Group for Kay Builders and Kay Walbert, LLC are incorporated here; rental apartments over podium parking, rental apartments over retail and office, as well as Townhomes over flats, a for-sale condominium product. This well-imagined mix will offer both rental and ownership options for the community. These product types have been master-planned by the developer in conjunction with Langan Engineering, and Jackson Land Planning group to create a neighborhood town center, having open space, restaurants and offices woven with trails and pathways connecting the residents to the uses while supporting the needs of the surrounding areas.

The townhomes offer traditional neighborhood design with rear loaded garages having direct access to the residences and an option for elevator access from the garage to the townhome levels. Rooftop terraces for the townhomes will give breathtaking views of the surrounding Lehigh Valley. With a modern interpretation of traditional details, the facades offer a contemporary aesthetic to the area. The first-floor flats also have direct access to the garages and main entrances that face the street.

The flats offer two bedroom / two bath single floor living with open plan living/dining areas. The townhomes are three-bedroom two and a half bath properties having large living and dining areas on the lower level, an option for elevator access from the garage to both living and sleeping levels as well as the rooftop terrace. The rooftop terraces are arranged to provide privacy between the residences and give the opportunity for views of the surrounding Lehigh Valley. With alley-loaded driveways and garages, the main entrances for the townhome residences are set between the garages and identified with porticos. Each level has direct access to a balcony or terrace

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The Martin Architectural Group was established in 1967 with a commitment to client service and design excellence. Our diverse portfolio includes mixed-use, multi-family residential, senior living communities, retail and office designs, transit-oriented developments, and sustainable projects. We are award-winning architects and planners committed to delivering the highest quality professional services to private sector real estate development.

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NEW JERSEY COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

By Michael F. Schipper, SIOR, The Blau & Berg Company

Demand in New Jersey's Industrial Real Estate Market

New Jersey, home to nearly nine million people, and in

direct proximity to one of the most densely populated cities in the nation has in turn become one of the most attractive industrial real estate markets in the country. Greatly supported by the rapidity in which e-commerce has taken a more significant stake in retail consumption, New Jersey's



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industrial real estate demand has significantly outgrown the existing supply of quality products. Tenants and prospective owners alike have consistently found themselves in competition for functional space, often losing to the higher bidding prospect, cash deal, or fastest and easiest transaction without much consideration

by the landlord or seller for much else. This anomaly has tremendously diminished the depth of supply and thus created a glut of willing and able occupiers in need of space.

Naturally, we have seen price appreciation exceed market standards with several market subsets doubling the value of their industrial

real estate assets or market lease rates within a few short years. Occupiers have been forced to look harder, further, and be more willing to accept the necessity above want, to secure space and continue to operate their businesses efficiently. Often the path of least resistance has become a reluctant decision to stay in

place despite the prospect of greater efficiency in greener pastures. On the tenant side, when faced with limited supply and lease rates greatly exceeding that which may be offered for renewal, the decision to renew prevails. This is a repeat circumstance that drastically reduces the availability of products that otherwise may have been brought to market. Conversely, the purchaser who has exhausted all efforts to acquire, outpriced by business counterparts and investors alike has been forced to continue with the status quo, often shifting into new space or continuing their existing lease. The seats required for musical chairs have ceased to exist.

As the market continues to exhibit signs of robust growth, the question has become whether this continued demand growth is truly upon the heels of organic expansion or bolstered by an inherent lack of supply. There are tens of millions of square feet planned or under construction slated for delivery over the next eighteen months. Meanwhile, the economy has exhibited two consistent quarters of negative GDP growth and the Federal Reserve Bank is on a mission to quell inflation by seemingly any means possible. While it is predicted that demand growth will continue in existing fashion over the next eighteen months and beyond, the pace of absorption upon delivery of the product underway will be the true determining factor as to whether the demand for industrial real estate in New Jersey is simply the benefactor of robust business growth or has been heavily supported by the lack of existing supply.

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Ridge Farms Townhomes over Flats offers . . .

continued from page 4D for outdoor living. These for-sale residences will provide the ability to have simplified living within walking distance of the adjacent neighborhood center, including restaurants and professional services.

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