

Special Advertising Feature
WESTCHESTER AND FAIRFIELD COUNTIES

Darien, Other Communities Boast Developments for New Home Buyers

RESIDENCES SUIT EMPTY NESTERS LOOKING FOR HIGH-END APARTMENT-STYLE LIVING

By Joseph Dobrian

Every so often, one town or another in Westchester or Fairfield Counties will undergo a major and rapid redevelopment, after several years of relative quiet, that will create a buzz and boost demand for homes there. Amy Barsanti, broker at William Pitt Sotheby's International Real Estate, reports that her base town of Darien, Conn., is currently undergoing such a transformation in the form of several development projects devised to lure new home buyers.

"In 2014," she explains, "Darien purchased a parcel on the water, adjacent to one of our public beaches, and surveyed the town to see what our residents are looking for in the way of amenities. The proposed result is an expanded beach park with tennis and paddle courts, pavilions, playgrounds, hiking trails,

boardwalks, launch pads for sailing, and possibly a pool. The residents wanted a mix of passive and active recreation, and the town listened," Ms. Barsanti says.

"The most exciting and transformative proposed development in Darien comes from two residents—David Genovese of Baywater Properties, and Penny Glassmeyer of PG Properties—who have been assembling land parcels over the past 10 years in our downtown corridor. They hired top talent. Robert A.M. Stern is the project architect and Bob Gibbs of Gibbs Planning Group is the retail consultant. The overall development will be in keeping with Darien's existing pre-war aesthetic, and will consist of 66 luxury apartments, 80,000 sq. ft. of office space, and 70,000 of retail, built around a pedestrian-friendly town green."

This development, Ms. Barsanti adds, should be a big help to older



Darien in Connecticut is getting several new residential developments.

residents who want to stay in the town but also downsize.

Baywater and PG report that the residences focus on empty nesters looking for high-end apartment-style living. Each residence will feature high ceilings, plenty of light, wood flooring throughout and designer

kitchens. Many will incorporate outdoor space.

TRADITIONAL RETAIL

The retail portion will continue the tradition in Darien of a downtown populated mostly by locally owned retailers. Many of the stores will open onto the

proposed town green—which will create an automobile-free zone. Bicycle racks will be installed throughout the project, and there will be space to accommodate the Darien Farmer's Market, theatrical productions and an ice rink.

Elsewhere in Fairfield County, retail geared to fitness and nutrition is proliferating in many communities. Many local fitness instructors have built successful personal-training careers, both in existing gyms and in their own locations.

In Westchester County, the big development news seems to revolve around music and theater: three popular venues have recently undergone major renovations and are attracting top performers to Tarrytown, Port Chester and Peekskill.

Joseph Dobrian is a freelance writer specializing in real estate matters.