

Heatherwood grows again

David Winzelberg

For a developer with such a long history on Long Island, it's not surprising that the name of the family-owned builder's newest community is a nod to the area's past.

Commack-based Heatherwood Luxury Rentals recently opened Heritage Spy Ring Golf Club in South Setauket, a 200-unit luxury apartment complex and nine-hole golf course named for the Culper Spy Ring, which operated in the Setauket area, providing intel for General George Washington on enemy troop movements during the British occupation of New York City in 1778.

And while its name may harken back to the Revolutionary War some 244 years ago, Heatherwood's latest development is anything but an antique, offering a comfortable contemporary lifestyle to renters aged 55 and over.



DOUGLAS PARTRICK and CHRISTOPHER CAPECE: Heatherwood's brain trust is building new communities and re-imagining its legacy properties. Photo by Judy Walker

Amenities at the new \$70 million South Setauket rental community feature a 6,500-square-foot clubhouse with a fully equipped fitness center, clubroom, conference room, event space and game room. There's also an outdoor pool and splash pad, fire pits, tennis and pickleball court, bocce court,

playground, 2-acre great lawn and walking trails.

As the name implies, one of the main attractions of the 70-acre Heritage Spy Ring Golf Club is a new nine-hole rolling layout designed by noted golf course architect Tyler Rae. In fact, the entire development was built on the former 18-hole Heatherwood Golf Club, originally built in the early 1960s by Heatherwood founders Donald Partrick and Stanley Neisloss.

Established in 1950 by Partrick and Neisloss, Heatherwood started out by building several single-family-home subdivisions on Long Island before the company turned its attention to multifamily rental developments. The firm's very first apartment community was the 272-unit Heatherwood House at Port Jefferson, which opened in 1962 and is still owned by the developer.



IN THE BEGINNING: Company co-founder Donald Partrick (center) with other execs and local officials at the original Heatherwood Golf Club site. Courtesy of Heatherwood

Today, Heatherwood's portfolio has grown to about 7,000 apartments in Queens, Brooklyn and throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties.

"Everything we own, we've built," says CEO Douglas Partrick, Donald Partrick's son, who first came into the business in 2002 soon after Neisloss died. "To this day, Heatherwood hasn't sold any of its developments."

In the last couple of years, Heatherwood has made some key additions to its executive team.

Christopher Capece, formerly with AvalonBay Communities, came on board as president in Jan. 2020 and this spring, Heatherwood added Sean Sallie, former deputy commissioner for planning at the

Nassau County Department of Public Works, who is now the company's director of Planning and Development.

“Although we sometimes consider acquisitions, our growth has historically been via new development. That’s part of Heatherwood’s DNA,” Capece said. “One of the strategic advantages of Heatherwood is that we’re a fully integrated development firm, including design, development, construction, operations and golf and recreational facilities.”

That strategy has been paying off, as the company can claim some major recent achievements. In 2018, Heatherwood opened Tower 28, a 450-unit apartment building in Long Island City. The 58-story complex, which cost well over \$200 million, was at the time the tallest residential building in New York City outside of Manhattan.

Another ongoing Heatherwood project will bring 125 apartments and 14 attached ranch-style homes to a 26.9-acre site just south of the company-owned-and-operated Pine Hills Golf Club in Manorville. Dubbed Sun River Town Homes, the \$31.16 million project will complement the company’s existing Villas at Pine Hills community where residents will share amenities that include a clubhouse, fitness center and pool.

Heatherwood is also planning on redeveloping the 9-acre site in West Hempstead formerly occupied by National Wholesale Liquidators. That project will transform the property, located across from the West Hempstead Long Island Rail Road station, into a 428-unit, transit-oriented rental complex. Currently in the permitting process, the company hopes to start construction before the end of next year.

And though Heatherwood is always looking for opportunities to expand its portfolio, it hasn’t forgotten about its existing communities. The company has recently embarked on a multi-million-dollar program to renovate and refresh its legacy rental complexes, adding amenities like turf soccer fields, new playground equipment, basketball and pickleball courts, even beach volleyball facilities.

“We did a full market assessment of our entire portfolio, considering demographics and competition, and we identified our communities where we want to begin our re-investment back into the properties,” Capece said.

The renovation work is nearly completed at the 348-unit Norwich Gate apartments in Oyster Bay, where the company built a brand-new clubhouse, courtyard area and added amenities. Next up is extensive renovations at Heatherwood House at Port Jefferson, the firm’s first-ever rental development. The project also includes redeveloping the community’s clubhouse and adding new amenities.

“Even though we’re constantly investing in all of our communities, we’ve just taken a more pointed approach to giving them an enhanced lifestyle,” Partrick said. “It’s not just re-investment. It’s a re-

imagining and creating a lifestyle.”



The conference and meeting area inside the new community’s clubhouse. Photo by Judy Walker

Heatherwood offers a wide range of monthly rents at its rental properties, starting at around \$1,500 at some of its Long Island communities to more than \$10,000 at some of its New York City buildings.

Monthly rents at the Heritage Spy Ring Golf Club range from around \$3,600 for a one-bedroom, one-bath apartment to more than \$6,600 for a three-bedroom, two-bath residence. Thirty of the new apartments are designated as workforce housing and priced with reduced rents, with half of those restricted to people earning up to 80 percent of the area median income and half for people earning up to 120 percent of the AMI. The South Setauket development is about 20 percent leased and move-ins began a couple of months ago.

Mitch Pally, CEO of the Long Island Builders Institute, said Heatherwood is a major player in the development of rental housing in Long Island, which is sorely needed.

“There’s no doubt that Heatherwood has been re-invigorated over the last couple of years, as you can see with both new projects like up in South Setauket and hopefully soon in West Hempstead, and refurbishing of their existing product line all throughout the Island,” Pally said. “They are very community oriented. They’ve done a lot through our charitable arm and with LIBI itself over the years. Doug is a former president of LIBI and Chris has been involved with our executive committee for many years, so they take a great role in the need for and the importance of rental housing on Long Island of all types to make it easier to meet the great demand that there is for rental housing.”





The 6,500-square-foot clubhouse at Heritage Spy Ring features a fully equipped fitness center, game room and other amenities. Photo by Judy Walker

Attorney Howard Stein, who heads the Real Estate Practice Group at East Meadow-based Certilman Balin Adler & Hyman and has worked on many Heatherwood projects, echoed that sentiment.

“Representing Heatherwood as a client has been and continues to be a rewarding opportunity,” Stein said. “Their projects are innovative and fulfill the needs of an evolving market. Their team is extremely professional and talented, and their reputation is impeccable because they always fulfill their promises.”

Meanwhile, as the company continues to grow on Long Island, the difficult development environment here poses a challenge and Heatherwood may eventually look to expand in other regions.

“Our preference is to invest in our home market,” Partrick said. “We strive to continue to keep our investment dollars on Long Island even in the face of often challenging entitlement hurdles, but we are also aware that there is capital flight out of the region for a reason.”

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