

MONTGOMERY AWARDS

Excellence in Planning and Design

2016 Award Winner



The Courts at Spring Mill Station Whitemarsh Township

The Courts at Spring Mill Station, a luxury apartment complex in Whitemarsh Township, received a 2016 Montgomery Award for creative site planning, pedestrian amenities and enhancements, and positive community reinvestment. This outstanding transit-oriented redevelopment project, located steps from SEPTA's Spring Mill Station and the Schuylkill River Trail, offers convenient pedestrian access and scenic views of the Schuylkill River.

Background

The Courts at Spring Mill Station, located along Hector Street, transformed a former industrial property into 385 apartments. This was the first project to be developed under Whitemarsh Township's Riverfront Development Overlay District. The intent of the district is to recognize the unique character of the riverfront and to preserve and enhance the public's access to the area. It envisions the redevelopment of riverfront





properties into transit-oriented mixed-use developments with community access and enhancement of the riverfront. The district encourages transit-oriented development by allowing an increase in residential density by conditional use and provides standards for building design and architecture, riverfront access, and open space.

Design

This 7.8-acre project consists of two 4-story apartment buildings housing 1- and 2-bedroom rental units. The complex, located adjacent to Spring Mill Station and the popular Schuylkill River Trail, exemplifies transit-oriented residential development. The majority of parking is accommodated in two parking garages, allowing for the more efficient use of land and reducing

the vehicular impact on the site. One building contains an underground parking garage, while the second building is arranged in a Texas donut design where the apartments are arranged around a 5-level parking garage. This innovative design provides easy access to parking for residents and visually screens the large parking structure from adjacent views. The building design, including staggered facades, use of large windows, varying roof lines, and a mix of building materials and colors that add visual interest, reflects the industrial heritage of the area. The Courts at Spring Mill Station provides residents with many amenities including a resort-style pool with barbecue and picnic area, clubroom with gaming and entertainment facilities, a business center, yoga studio, fitness center, indoor basketball and volleyball courts, and a pet washing station.



Public Amenities

The zoning district requires 5 percent of total onsite parking to be public and 5 percent of the net property to offer public amenities. This project provides 34 public parking spaces and several public gathering areas. Located at the prominent corners of Lee and Station Avenues, these areas provide seating, lighting, and landscaping. An old water tower was removed and replaced with a unique modern sculpture, enhancing the public plaza at Station Avenue. A well-designed courtyard, located between the apartment buildings, offers seating areas, lighting, and lush landscaping while also serving as a convenient pedestrian connection from Hector Street to the train station and trail. These attractive public plazas, combined with a new sidewalk, pedestrian lighting, street trees, and landscaping, enhance the streetscape along Hector Street.

Historic Preservation

This project also included the preservation and renovation of the historic Miller's House, which dates back to 1770 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This 2-story, 2,500-square-foot building was creatively transformed into a bike shop and café. The historic building, with its large load-bearing walls, tight staircase, and Old World features, posed many challenges and required extensive restoration. The restoration involved installing new windows and electric, plumbing, and HVAC systems. A Colonial color scheme was used, and the counters were built from reclaimed wood, paying homage to the building's history. Located along Station Avenue, adjacent to the trail and train station, these new businesses serve residents, commuters, and trail users.

The Courts at Spring Mill Station is an outstanding transit-oriented development project that successfully transformed a former industrial site into an appealing residential neighborhood. This project provides residents and the public with convenient access to transit and recreational amenities and offers inviting public spaces for the community.



Location

1101 East Hector Street
Whitemarsh Township
Montgomery County

Project Data

Land Use

Residential-multifamily – 385 units

Tract Size

7.8 acres

Zoning

Heavy Industrial/Riverfront Development Overlay District

Building Area

448,592 square feet (excluding garages)

Open Space

2.44 acres

Density

49.11 du/acre

Parking

650 garage spaces

47 surface parking (34 public spaces)

Key Features

- Transit-oriented development
- Redevelopment
- Economic impacts
- Site planning
- Pedestrian amenities
- Streetscape improvements

Owner

GMH Capital Partners
10 Campus Boulevard
Newtown Square, PA 19073

Developer

Home Properties Whitemarsh LLC
8229 Boone Boulevard, Suite 500
Vienna, VA 22182

Engineer

Bohler Engineering
1600 Manor Drive, Suite 200
Chalfont, PA 18914

Architect

KTGY Architecture + Planning
8609 Westwood Center Drive, Suite 600
Tysons, VA 22182

Land Planner/Landscape Architect

Glackin Thomas Panzak, Inc.
Paoli Executive Green 1, Suite 300
41 Leopard Road
Paoli, PA 19301

Traffic Engineering

Traffic Planning and Design, Inc.
2500 East High Street, Suite 650
Pottstown, PA 19464

The annual Montgomery Awards recognize the best in planning, design, and advocacy in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.

www.montcopa.org/MontgomeryAwards



Montgomery County Board of Commissioners

Josh Shapiro, *Chair* • Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, *Vice Chair* • Joseph C. Gale



Montgomery County Planning Commission, P.O. Box 311, Norristown, PA 19404-0311 • www.montcopa.org/planning