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Equal Opportunity Design

By ANTOINETTE MARTIN

WOODBURY, N.Y.

JUST off the New York State Thruway, in the Orange County town of Woodbury, a developer called the Carteret Group is planning a single-family-home development that it is billing as “multigenerational.” The 450-house community, called Woodbury Junction, will offer 320 homes designed for families of any age, priced from the low \$500,000s, and 130 homes designed for people 55 and over, at prices starting in the high \$300,000s.

It is not the only multifamily development in the region to set aside units as age-restricted — often to meet a requirement for lower-income housing. Yet no other is configured in quite the same way, said Barbara Kleger, an independent consultant in the “active adult” residential market.

What sets Woodbury Junction apart is that the over-55s will reside in detached single-family houses that look exactly like the other homes, according to the developer, the Carteret Group. Residents can choose among three styles — Classic Farmhouse, Folk-Victorian and Craftsman. But inside the houses, square footage, layouts and amenities will differ depending on residents’ lifestyles. For example, in the houses for over-55s, dining rooms are designed as “flexible space,” since a family-size dining room may not be required, the developers said.

“Maybe the most unusual thing is that we will have two clubhouses,” said Virginia Brodsky, who is directing sales for the Carteret Group. “The active-adult clubhouse will have an indoor pool, fitness center, recreation rooms, etc., plus a martini bar, and the family clubhouse will have an outdoor pool, kiddie pool, its own fitness center, a tot lot, various recreation rooms and sports courts.”

The over-55s will have the use of both clubhouses and will be able to accompany grandchildren to the kiddie pool, for example, Ms. Brodsky said — and then retreat to the “peace and quiet” of their home clubhouse.

“We’ve been planning to buy a home for three years, and found no community like this,” said Madeline Borowski, 60, who with her husband, Frank, 65, has been seeking a house near their children. (Two live in Monroe, and another in Montville, N.J.)

Mrs. Borowski said she was thrilled with the mixed-ages concept. “I need children and young families in my life,” she said, adding that she had chosen a lot right on the street at the entrance to Woodbury, so she can wave to people as they come in.

In what is perhaps a more typical model for an all-ages project, in Bergen County, N.J., a separate 77-unit condominium is planned for resident 55 and older, as part of a 788-unit community with various other kinds

of housing. The builder, Somerset Development, is working on the site of a former World War II airplane engine factory in Wood-Ridge.

“Our idea is to create an entire new village,” said Ralph Zucker of Somerset, describing “a wide variety of housing, a public square, a community center, retail, a new middle school, walking and biking paths, and office and retail facilities all within a five-minute walk of a planned new train station.”

At Woodbury Junction, according to Ms. Brodsky, the idea is to take advantage of existing public amenities — the [Hudson Valley](#)’s natural glories, its historic sites and wineries, the highly rated Woodbury-Monroe schools and the lure of abundant shopping — and then add an array of community amenities to the mix.

Set in the southernmost section of Orange County near Bear Mountain and Appalachian hiking trails — and near the popular Woodbury Common outlet mall — the community will be gated. It will be built up around a large existing pond; the neighborhood for over-55s will be in one corner, with its own entrance.

Sales opened on Sept. 8 for the first 15 age-restricted houses and the first 5 all-age units, just as ground was being broken at the 120-acre site near the heavily trafficked junction of Interstate 87 and Route 6.

Dozens of home shoppers appeared on the first two weekends at the sales office in a tiny strip mall a half-mile from the site, and two active-adult contracts were signed within the first few days.

To be the first in line, Mrs. Borowski waited outside the office all day the day before sales opened. She expressed enthusiasm for “the wide-open design of the inside of the house,” adding: “I’ve always been in the corner, cooking and cleaning up, while everybody else was out there having fun in the living-room-rec-room. Now, I’ll be in on all of it.”

After 32 years of maintaining a four-bedroom home in Rockland County, she said, she is ready for a property requiring less work.

But living at Woodbury Junction will not mean living completely maintenance-free. Residents will be responsible for their own lawn-mowing and snow removal, though Ms. Brodsky did say contractors would be made available at a discount. Residents will also pay a monthly amenities fee, \$95 for older residents, \$121 for others.

Sharon and Elliot Gold, who are 55 and 56, signed a contract on a house last week. “I like the single-family houses,” Mrs. Gold said. “The condos and town houses we have looked at were all connected to each other.”

Also, she added, “this way we have a little land where I can grow some vegetables if I want to, and not have to check with anybody.”

The Golds, who operate First Class Day Care in Chester northwest of Woodbury, said they liked the community’s location, and the fact that they could easily take mass transit to [New York City](#). There are various bus routes, and the Harriman train station is a quick drive away. The commute to [Manhattan](#) takes about an hour, according to Ms. Brodsky.

The one note of perplexity was sounded by Mr. Gold, who said he was flummoxed by the many choices for interior appointments. “I think they showed us pictures of 100 different doorknobs,” he said.

“That should be your biggest problem,” retorted his wife, who expressed delight with the choices.

Woodbury Junction’s three active-adult floor plans have master bedrooms on the first floor, and offer 1,500, 1,700 or 2,100 square feet of living space, with two-car garages, central air and fireplaces.

Homes in the all-age neighborhood offer four different floor plans, ranging in size from 2,300 to 3,000 square feet and offering “bonus rooms,” sunrooms and finished basements.

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