



Cornerstone Homes plans to resume construction of its Church Square 55-and-up development this fall. Only 44 of the planned 118 residences are complete or in progress. (Stephen Faleski | The Smithfield Times)

Church Square development to resume



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Cornerstone Homes, a Richmond-based developer of age-targeted and age-restricted communities, announced plans Sept. 1 to resume work this fall on the Church Square 55-and-up development in Smithfield.

The development is located at the intersection of South Church and Durham streets east of the Cypress Creek Bridge. A Newport News-based developer purchased the land in 2004 and began construction in 2007, but sales slowed during and after the 2009 recession.

Cornerstone, which had previously developed the Villas at Smithfield 55-and-up community off Battery Park Road in 2010, was “looking for an opportunity to get back in that market” and acquired the Church Square project earlier this year, said Kirsten Nease, Cornerstone’s director of marketing.

According to a Cornerstone press release, only 44 of the planned 118 residential units are currently complete or in progress. Land transfers filed at the Isle of Wight County Courthouse in August show The Crescent Group, a Cornerstone affiliate operating under the name Church Square Development LLC, acquired the 12 Phase 1 lots for just over \$3 million.

Cornerstone plans to build the remaining homes over a three-year period.

“We will be building 12 homes on existing build-ready lots in Phase 1 starting this fall,” Nease said.

For Phase 2, Cornerstone plans to submit revised plans to Smithfield’s Department of Planning and Community Development. The revisions, Nease said, are necessary to facilitate zero-threshold entrances and universal design sidewalks to ensure there are no steps into the homes or onto the sidewalks throughout the community.

“Additionally, we foresaw a way to create additional greenspace, create additional parking for our residents and enhance the overall community plan in our Phase 2 revisions,” Nease said.

This will be an administrative process, not a public one, according to Mike Lang, president of The Crescent Group. Crescent will be the project’s developer. Cornerstone is its parent company, Nease explained.

According to Lang, the site plan amendment will not need to go to the town’s Planning Commission or Town Council for either body’s approval, but “we’ve had a really great response from the community,” Nease said.

Cornerstone isn’t proposing to build more than the 118-unit total approved in 2004, she confirmed.

“We are familiar with the Tidewater/Hampton Roads market, having completed six other communities in this region ... Church Square will be another boutique community that is a quick start in a region we are familiar with that is growing in demand,” Nease said.

The 12 homes in Phase 1 will be duplexes. The remaining 62 homes will be villa-style with 48 in four-unit buildings and 14 as duplex villas. The 12 Phase 1 homes are expected to be complete by the first quarter of 2022, with sales starting this October.

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