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Deal of the Week: Apartment complex works to stand out from the rest

New apartment complex stresses service by doing residents' laundry for free

By Katherine Feser | April 2, 2016



IMAGE 1 OF 7

The The Heights at Westchase offers 265 one- and two-bedroom units at 3505 W. Sam Houston Parkway S. near Richmond Ave.

The Heights at Westchase, the first of three new apartment projects to open in Westchase, adds an upscale rental option to the west Houston business district.

And the free laundry services for residents have nothing to do with concessions that are becoming more common in Houston's oversupplied apartment market, the developer says. Grab-and-go breakfast is free, too, on weekdays. And housekeeping services are available for a fee.

Those are just some examples of the level of service that Atlanta-based Worthing Cos. likes to bring to its properties, according to the on-site community director.

"We kind of mimic the Ritz-Carlton where we offer a significant white glove service,"

Nicki Trinidad said. "Once you move in, you're given the royal treatment."

The four-story community offers 265 one- and two-bedroom units at 3505 W. Sam Houston Parkway South near Richmond Avenue.

Rents range from \$1,170 to \$2,080, Trinidad said. Construction specials are being offered as portions of the project are still being completed.

Since opening at the end of September, the community is 30 percent occupied and 60 percent pre-leased, Trinidad said.

The Heights at Westchase and two other projects will add 827 units to Westchase and give it a total of 54 apartment complexes. Richfield Real Estate Corp., a sizable property owner in Westchase, is more than doubling the size of Portico at West8 3003 Seagler Road by adding 296 units for a total of 526 units.

Residences at CityWest, a project by Houston-based Crimson Real Estate Fund and San Antonio-based USAA Real Estate Co., will add 266 units at 2525 Rogerdale next to Phillips 66 new campus.

A report commissioned by the Westchase District two years ago, before the tumble in oil prices and subsequent cutbacks at energy

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companies, showed the region was more than 7,000 units short of having enough Class A units to serve its workforce. That means many of the people who work in the Westchase area rent apartments elsewhere.



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"The Heights, the expansion of Portico at West8, and the construction of Residences at CityWest will all help meet that gap, but we're hopeful that other developers will look our way in the next few years as the economy strengthens again," said Sherry Fox, vice president of communications at the Westchase District.

Overall apartment rents are down by 3.3 percent over the last six months in Westchase, likely because of its proximity to the Energy Corridor, according to Bruce McClenny of research firm Apartment Data Services.

Class A rents of \$1,358 are down from a recent peak of \$1,422 in October and are about the same as the summer of 2014, McClenny said. The new Portico at West8 and Heights at Westchase communities are leasing up at prices the same or lower than the existing Class A communities.

The Energy Corridor submarket farther west has 10 new communities in lease-up, he said.

Developers are increasingly offering concessions such as free rent to land tenants, particularly in the areas where building has been concentrated. Of the 27,000 units under construction across the Houston area, about 85 percent are in the Inner Loop, Galleria, Energy Corridor, Katy, Spring, The Woodlands and Conroe, according to Apartment Data Services.

The Heights at Westchase is the newest local project of the Worthing Cos., which opened the Heights at Park Row in west Houston last year and will open the Heights at Harper's Preserve in The Woodlands this summer.



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