Rivera Greens Case Study

Project Information

Level of Certification: Four Stars NGBS Certified

Location: Clarence, NY

Size of Site: 20-acre infill site

Site Details: 35 homes

Year Site Development Began: 2011

Project Team

Developer: Natale Builders

Designer: Natale Builders

Verifier: Building Performance Solutions

Meaningful Partnerships: Bissel Stone Associates, Haskel Tree Service Inc, WNY Re-Tree, Anastasi Construction, National Wildlife Federation

Key Features

Slope Disturbance:

- Soil disturbance was kept to a minimum, and two staging areas for topsoil were established with grade in mind.
- Silt fences were put in place and monitored weekly.

Foliage and Soil:

- Natale hired a licensed arborist to prune vegetation and protect soils.

Specifics

Rivera Greens sits nestled into the town of Clarence, New York, between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Natale Builders have been engaged in custom homebuilding in the region since 1969, but Rivera Greens reflected a new, green approach to development. Local partnerships, onsite recycling, multipurpose open space, and wetlands and tree conservation were all development goals, earning the project the first National Green Building Standard (NGBS) Four-Star rating in New York.

Managing stormwater and maintaining permeable surfaces is paramount for new developments in the area because of the nearby significant water bodies. To address this, Natale Builders developed a comprehensive Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to limit runoff during and after construction, while protecting natural onsite features. Three sensitive features were given top priority on the site: a pond, five acres of wetlands and a freshwater well. These water sources were able to be used as resources for common area irrigation. In addition, a one-acre retention pond was designed to limit runoff. Further runoff mitigation and flood control was accomplished by preserving the site's natural wetlands.

The site previously included a nine-acre farm and century-old barn, that was deconstructed to make a gazebo and park benches, each contributing to aspects of Rivera Greens' materials sourcing. Repurposing materials found onsite contributed towards NGBS certification.

Wildlife Habitat

NAHB
National Association of Home Builders

Key Features Cont.

Stormwater Management:

- The stormwater management plan includes a retention pond and protects the natural onsite pond.

Landscape Plan:

- Natale partnered with WNY Re-Tree and established an onsite tree farm that is supported by the Eagle Scouts of Clarence.
- The pond water and natural well water are used for common irrigation.
- New sod seeds were engineered through a local company to suit the local soil and precipitation levels.

Wildlife:

- The site includes a five-acre National Wildlife Federation certified habitat.

Cluster Development:

- Natale and the town of Clarence worked together to guarantee at least fifty percent greenspace on the site.

Natural Resources:

- Road placement avoided disturbance of 100-year old trees.
- The retention pond was redesigned to protect existing sixty-foot tall trees.
- A majority of the common space was planted with native vegetation.

Pond on Site

Natale Builders worked with the town of Clarence to meet a local ordinance in reserving fifty percent of the site for green space. The wetlands and pond met the open space requirement and created an amenity for the neighborhood. The development team also worked with a local organization, WNY Re-Tree, to establish a two-acre tree farm on the property. In addition, Natale Builders worked with a local sod and lawn company, who designed a new type of grass seed that requires thirty percent less water than traditional grass.

A unique aspect of development came from supportive green building subsidies from the State of New York. Building grants and rebates for energy-efficient, small footprint homes added up to $8,000 in savings for some individual units. These kinds of financial incentives can play a large role in promoting sustainable land development.

Those engaged in the home building industry can greatly benefit from developing sites where there are incentives to do so, particularly for green development. The success of this project was reflected in sales: thirty homes were sold in three years, a relatively quick sales rate for the area.

All information in this case study was provided by one or more members of the project team.
For information on certifying your project to the NGBS, visit homeinnovation.com/green

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For more information visit
nahb.org/sustainability