

Retreat at Newark Student Housing Complex Sells for \$48 Million

By Josh Shannon | June 27, 2019

A New York investment firm has purchased The Retreat at Newark student housing complex for \$48 million, the company announced this week.

Vesper Holdings plans to invest \$1 million in renovations to the five-year-old complex, which surrounds Suburban Plaza on Elkton Road.

"Our acquisition of The Retreat at Newark is part of a strategy to purchase well-located properties that offer our investors superior risk-adjusted returns," Isaac Sitt, co-founder of Vesper Holdings, said in a prepared statement. "We are pleased to expand our portfolio into Delaware and incorporate this property into our rapidly growing student housing portfolio."

Vesper purchased the buildings and the business, but like all the land at Suburban Plaza, the property remains owned by Pauline A.

Mayer Inc., which offers long-term ground leases to various companies.

Built in 2014, The Retreat includes 39 two-story cottages and 130 lodge-style apartments for a



The Retreat at Newark, a student housing complex that flanks Suburban Plaza, recently sold for \$48

total of 597 beds and offers amenities like a swimming pool, computer lounge, hot tub, tanning beds and a golf simulator.

Rents range from just over \$1,200 per month for a one-bedroom apartment to nearly \$4,000 for a five-bedroom unit.

The Retreat has a controversial history in Newark after a previous owner angered some city officials and residents by doing an about-face on its pledge to target young professionals rather than students.

Seeking a rezoning in spring 2013, developer AUDG Holdings sold city council on a plan to build The Cottages at the Plaza, which would be

marketed toward families and professionals working at places like the STAR Campus.

However, before construction was complete, the complex was sold to student housing company Landmark Properties, which renamed it and switched the focus to students. The company marketed the complex as “the official student housing partner of UD athletics” and advertised it using pictures of college-aged

students laying by a pool, hanging out in lounges and passing a football on the lawn.

The Retreat has been student-focused ever since, and that focus will continue under Vesper, which owns student housing at 21 schools in 13 states. The property will be managed by Vesper’s in-house property management company, the Texas-based Campus Life & Style.