

PENN VALLEY CONSTRUCTORS, ^{INC.}

“Partners in Excellence”

ISSUE XLII



By Jon Otto with Corinna Garis



In the last three years, Dublin Town Center has boomed with 78 new townhomes, 30 apartments, 17 new shops, eateries, brew pub and wine bar, along with more than 20 businesses. It's become a desired place to work, shop, live, and play.

Dublin Town Center recently won the Bucks Happening List's Best Retail Shopping Destination, won 1st Place in The Philadelphia Business Journal's Best Real Estate Deal in Retail Development and has been lauded as Bucks County's Next Destination Town by many publications, tourism entities and influencers.

To say Dublin Town Center has had a banner start is an understatement and its beautifully designed and constructed mixed-use building, and the businesses and residents that call it home are a large part of that. Dublin residents and passers-by remark on its beauty, impressed and appreciative of its attractive exterior, consistent with its Bucks County surroundings. The businesses and residents who spend their time there are pleased and thankful for a safe, attractive, well-constructed interior where they work and live.

Penn Valley Constructors is proud to have been selected as the design-build contractor for the mixed-use building that came to be known as “The Lofts”. Rob Loughery, Managing Partner of the project's developer, Nehemiah Development, brought us into the project early to integrate our design/build

mechanical and plumbing contractors into the process and to establish the locations of mechanical loads and access chases. In this building with 30 apartments on two levels, stacked on top of the ground floor commercial and parking areas lots of things had to go from top to bottom and bottom to top as well as horizontally out the walls; sprinkler pipes, rainwater conductors, water lines, plumbing vents and drains, dryer vents, electrical race ways, low voltage wiring and lavatory and kitchen exhausts to name a few.

Before the work of those contractors could be integrated, the contractors had to be selected. So, in the spring of 2020, one of our first tasks was to define the scopes of work for those subcontractors, take proposals from qualified contractors, review them with Rob and his team





and then select our contractors. In July we selected I.T. Landes as the plumbing contractor, J.A. Smith as the HVAC contractor and Commonwealth Fire Protection for sprinkler. They were immediately brought into the design process and worked seamlessly with the architect, Stampfl Associates, in developing the final design.

So far, so good, but it wasn't going to be easy; two unique conditions impacted the design and construction of the Lofts. First, the beginnings of the Covid pandemic changed everything; meetings had to be changed to remote which, while we take it for granted now, was a very new thing in the early summer of 2020. Of course, people got sick and could not work. People started to work from home rather than collaborating across the table at the office. It took some time to get used to and slowed the process. The second condition that was unique to the time of design and construction was a period of virtually unprecedented volatility in commodity and construction material pricing. With the volatility came extremely long lead times for steel, lumber, plywood, windows, doors, plumbing and heating equipment and electrical gear and other things you would never have expected.

Starting with rebar and structural steel, virtually every component of the project had to be preordered and

carefully tracked. We took early delivery of structural steel, plywood, floor trusses, 170 windows, roof insulation, shower enclosures, plumbing fixtures and water heaters to avoid price increases of 20 and even 30%. We had material stored in multiple locations off site and the site itself was crowded with building materials that often would not be needed for months. Fortunately, the first floor of the building included an enclosed parking area.

This with the addition of chain link fence provided dry secure space which, as the saying goes, "kept the honest people honest". We were blessed to have almost no theft on the jobsite where literally hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of material was exposed and vulnerable. This was an extra labor for our team of Project Manager, John Redfield, and Site Superintendent, George McCardle. They handled it extremely well and with few exceptions we and our subcontractors had the material that was needed when it was needed.



Design work was far enough along in February of 2021 that we could apply for a building permit. Dublin Borough was friendly to the project so the permit was turned around in a timely fashion and after waiting out the last remnants of winter, we made the first footing pour on

March 29, 2021. Concrete footings and piers, below grade masonry along with construction of the elevator shaft and the west end stair tower consumed most of April.

On April 26, the erection of the structural steel second floor was started and continued for the next three weeks.





For the next 5 months we “built up” and closed in, making the building weather tight. At times we were delayed by deliveries of special heavy gauge steel studs that could not be released until shop drawings and field measurements were approved but overall, our progress was good in spite of all the “supply chain” issues that plagued the construction industry in 2021 and 2022.

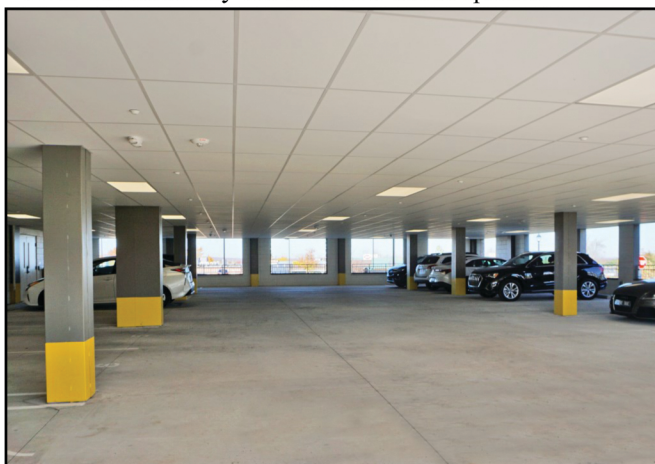
Starting in December, with the building sheathed and



wrapped, windows in and roofs on, we reversed direction and started to “build down” from the third floor. Above ceiling mechanical rough-ins, wiring, sprinklers and plumbing had to be completed before drywall could start. John and George set the schedule up as an assembly line of 5 to 6 apartment “blocks”, attacking the rough-ins, then the drywall followed by kitchen cabinetry and granite counters, bathroom installations and finally paint and floor coverings.



So, downward we marched through the 30 apartment units. While as the weather warmed, we simultaneously attacked the exterior finishes, interior stairs, common areas and ultimately the first-floor tenant spaces.





South facing view

In April the appliance installation was started with punch list and final cleaning following right on its heels. By the end of the month, we started with final inspections on a unit by unit basis and on May 1, 2022 the first group of occupants started to move into the apartment units.

Since then, the inhabitants of the mixed-use building apartments and businesses have put their roots down, investing in surrounding opportunities, pleased with their homes and workplaces, and looking toward the future. This Penn Valley Constructors building foundationally provides Dublin Town Center the opportunity to continue the spirit of their mission; to provide a place where people can happily, safely, continually WORK, shop, LIVE, and play.

For More Information:

The Lofts at Town Center
123 N. Main Street
Dublin, PA 19055
www.loftsattowncenter.com/



Penn Valley Constructors, Inc.

1707 South Pennsylvania Avenue
Morrisville, PA 19067
1-800-523-3746 • 215-295-5055 • Fax: 215-295-2980
www.pennvall.com
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Contact us for your next project!

800.523.3746



North facing view