

REALESTATE

SEE INSIDE FOR RECENTLY SOLD HOMES IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

SHELL POINT BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE ON THE ROOTS OF ITS PAST



This is a rendering of what Vista Cay will look like when it is built on The Island in the Shell Point community. PHOTOS FROM SHELL POINT

By Andrea Stetson

Shell Point Retirement Community in Fort Myers is heading back to its roots on The Island. Plans are now underway to build a new midrise residential building and huge recreation area. The Island neighborhood is where it all began in 1968 when Shell Point started. Since then it's expanded to six additional neighborhoods with a variety of residential options and amenities. This is the first time in decades that The Island is a focus of growth.

Vista Cay will have 12 residential floors with 59 residences over parking. There will be 15 floorplans including ones with lofts, high ceilings, large balconies and penthouses. Every home will have either a sunrise or a sunset view. Residences will range in size from 1,544 to 2,722 square feet. Residents can choose units with three bedrooms or two bedrooms. The midrise will also have a social room, catering kitchen and social room.

Adjacent to Vista Cay, the community is creating a 100,000 square foot Island Commons. This will have a community store, market, Crystal Restaurant, private dining room, banquet room, billiards room, card rooms, classrooms, library, media room, group fitness room and guest houses.

"The project is part of our expansion and redevelopment plan for the island," said

Martin Schappell, president and CEO of Shell Point.

He said the nine Garden apartments that opened in 1968, will not be affected by the expansion. The Island has extra room now for growth after Shell Point relocated its 219 bed skilled nursing facility to another section of the community. The plan is to build the community center on the site of the former nursing facility.

"When the amenities move into the new building that allows us to tear down the old amenities building and then that is where we are building Vista Cay," Schappell explained.

Schappell said it is all part of Shell Point's mission and vision.

"This is a continuation of our 50 year history of expansion and redevelopment," he said. "We are committed to continuing to offer products that our future resident's



The Island is a section of Shell Point and was the first section built upon when the community was established in 1968. PHOTOS FROM SHELL POINT

desire and a commitment to support a lifestyle that reflects the interests of the growing and changing interest of our population."

Schappell said residents want something new, and to be competitive with all the new developments in Southwest Florida, they need to keep growing and changing.

"They want amenities that are more current and they want housing that is more current with square footage, finishes, views and finish,"

Lorraine and Bill Frey want something new and higher so they plan to move into Vista Cay when it is done. The couple has lived in Shell Point for seven years, but wants something different now.

"Moving up became extremely important to us after Hurricane Ian," Lorraine Frey stressed. "We want to move to higher ground. "We are in an individual home now and we like it. We have great neighbors, but we are excited about the prospect of being in a brand new building with

fantastic views and going to higher ground is very attractive as well."

They also like the location of Vista Cay.

"We love the walkability of everything," Frey said. "We really like the idea that church is very close so we could walk to church. Once the amenity building is done we can walk to the restaurants and everything we need."

George Waters, chairman of the resident's council, thinks the building is a positive addition for residents and the community.

"The community has to stay up with the times, and the times are that people that are coming in want architecture and amenities that they can get elsewhere, so we have to stay equal or better than other communities," Waters began.

Waters feels secure knowing that financially the expansion won't be risky.

"Shell Point does not develop on a speculative basis," he stressed. "There are no shovels that go into the ground until the financing is in place. Over the 13 years we have been residents, each development that we have witnessed there have been sufficient sales before the construction began."

Residents are also relieved to hear that the new amenities center will double as an evacuation shelter.

"The evacuation center we have now is an old parking garage, but this will be capable of a cat 5 and would have restaurants, and air conditioning and other comforts for the residents," Waters stressed.

Schappell said there are even more plans for the future of Shell Point.

"Five years ago pickleball was not something people even knew about," he explained. "We added five pickleball courts, and people can't even get a court, so we are thinking about eliminating two tennis courts to make four more pickleball courts. This is another example of how we heard our residents and we listened to the general population. They want amenities that are more current. There are several things that make us distinctive and separate us from other communities. We have a 50 year commitment to be visionary and manage for today and plan for tomorrow."