

Two Former Circuit City Holdings Trade

With two more deals, Circuit City's imprint on the county fades further into oblivion.

The electronics retailer's former store in Temple Hills was sold recently to serve as a headquarters and retail outlet for Beauty 4 U. The cosmetics firm paid \$2.1 million for the 32,065 square foot store, according to a release by broker Marcus & Millichap.

The same week, the Brandywine warehouse that served as Circuit City's distribution center has changed hands, going to Exeter Property Group.

Exeter's last acquisition in Prince George's County was a nearly empty building in the former Giant distribution center in Landover. This time, it bought one that was fully leased, so it doesn't have to deal with the pesky demands of showing space. Exeter, based in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., paid \$11 million, or \$27.96 per square foot, for 14301 Mattawoman Drive in Brandywine. At 393,440 square feet, the entire building is given over to new tenant hhgregg's distribution needs.

Gregg's lease at the building, written last fall, is good through 2017, and is believed to average about \$3.25 per foot across the term.

Published reports had a Minnesota firm named Welsh Property Trust buying the warehouse. Exeter was always going to take title, but had planned on contributing the building to an Initial Public Offering in return for shares in the REIT. That IPO was postponed, however.

Beauty 4 U, meanwhile, may be getting itself into a local catfight over cosmetic comeliness, for My Beauty recently leased space in Landover for a big store of its own.

In Brandywine, Exeter represented itself, while Matthew Laraway and Ned Brady of Cushman & Wakefield represented the seller, Capital Development Company.

Residential

Second Builder for Belmont

Time was, a few years back, when Belmont Crest was a pastoral subdivision in which two builders quietly worked for sales and built houses, and life was good.

Then the recession intervened. Now, with D.R. Horton joining K. Hovnanian, two builders are back. Horton, with 32 lots, will largely split the remaining 65 to 70 lots with KHov in the single-family job off Woodyard Road in Upper Marlboro. Cypress Homes, an affiliate of co-developer Vendemia & DeCesaris, has been selling in Belmont but will gradually cede its position to Horton. Both Cypress and KHov start at \$399,990.

Horton, meanwhile, has now tripled its presence in the county. From just Balk Hill in Mitchellville, it has expanded in short order, first to Manning Village, in Accokeek, where it has 11 lots, and now into Belmont Crest.

Steven Efantis and Bruce Winston of Fraser Forbes Real Estate brokered the deal.

In other deals, Richmond American Homes will finish out Cheltenham Knolls in Clinton. It knows the market, having been there for years. But it just picked up the last 30 finished lots, located off Dangerfield Road, from a partnership headed by Haverford Homes for \$1,050,000.

Westphalia Town Center Goes Back

At a short auction attended by just a handful of people, Wells Fargo bid \$21 million to take back the note on the 530-acre Westphalia Town Center property just north of Route 4 outside Upper Marlboro. Former owner Sandler at Westphalia LLC had been negotiating back to last year to return the property to the bank.

The Town Center is at the heart of the much larger Westphalia plan, and Virginia Beach, Va.-based Sandler & Sons had won approval for 5,000 units, and about 5.9 million square feet of commercial, including up to 1.4 million feet in retail. It includes a huge office component that county officials hope may develop as federal or secure space. The residential includes the range of product, from singles to towns and multi-family.

Sandler had paid approximately \$65 million for the bulk of the assemblage. It included the Carrozza and Presidential Corporate Center properties, and was financed by a loan from Wells Fargo that had grown to over \$47 million by the time of the foreclosure.

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