

Ewen Point

Ulster County, New York



Location:	Esopus Lake, NY
Type:	Environmental Village
Year Design:	2004
Status:	Planned
Size:	350 Acres
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Whereas previous expansions of New York City have tended to be a sort of spillover that has resulted in sprawl in many places, the new town of Ewen Point has the opportunity to correct the direction of growth in the region. Located on 350 acres along the Hudson River, the site encompasses two-thirds of the shoreline of Esopus Lake within its boundaries and also has a toehold on Mirror Lake below it. The site lies relatively close to the existing urbanized area and is already zoned and slated for a development.



The new plan for Ewen Point is built upon a 1993 permit plan for the site, which included 350 units—principally apartments and townhouses, with about 19 single-family houses. Thoroughly negotiated at the time was the relationship of the buildings to the Hudson River. The new plan, rather than believing that every building will automatically ruin the view, contends that it is possible to build a beautiful, high-quality human habitat that actually enhances the landscape. To this end, the plan for Ewen Point calls for a compact, walkable village of small blocks, with a system of pedestrian passages and greens, squares, and playgrounds dispersed throughout the urban fabric. A range of development, from more urban to more rural, will be included to create a community with the diversity of a real place. The plan will achieve this variety by employing a design methodology called the Transect, which represents the gradual transition of human environments from urban to rural. A wide mix of housing types (including live-work or shopfront units) is distributed according to the Transect and is based on examples of local vernacular architecture.



Three manor houses, reconfigured from the 1993 plan, form a town square overlooking the Hudson. The square grants “ownership” of the views to the entire community rather than just the people living in the manor houses; and the space forms the focal point of the community, with the main entry avenue terminating on the space and the entire street network stemming from it. The inn located there will have a restaurant and a café, providing the necessary activity for a lively neighborhood center.



Ewen Point will be explicitly environmental. Storm water treatment, for example, will be accomplished through a collection system by which the slopes are gracefully engaged, carrying water down in a rivulet to an interception pond where the water is cleansed before being released to the wetlands. The most significant environmental provision of the plan is the removal of a 9-hole golf course in the prior plan. While the course was, technically speaking, open space, it would have required the destruction of most of the existing trees. The current plan preserves these trees, in addition to many others throughout the site.