

'Ovation' greets project

Chuck Chiang, Calgary Herald

Published: Saturday, October 04, 2008

Piece of Paradise : Victoria Area

In today's age of massive concrete, glass and steel condo skyscrapers, it isn't surprising to hear about neighbourhood associations battling developers when a new project is broached.

So when Three Point Properties unveiled its plans a few years ago for a condo project in the small Victoria neighbourhood of James Bay, a standing ovation might have been the last reaction the developer expected.

But that was exactly what happened, says development manager Dan Robbins.

"The community association gave us a standing ovation," he says.

"The project has been very warmly received by the community. If we had gone for more density, there would have probably been a fight and it would have made it longer to build."

Density is the key separator between The Breakwater -- Three Point's James Bay condo townhouses -- from the multi-family towers that now increasingly dominate Victoria's skyline.

The brownstone-style townhomes are only two-storeys high and fit neatly onto Victoria's waterfront, integrating themselves into the surrounding community instead of imposing on it.

"It's a very high-end product," says Becky Julseth, Three Point's communications and marketing manager.

"There are courtyards in the front and back for people to sit outside and have a cup of coffee. They can drive around the back to their own individual garages instead of parking spots.

"It's more like a collection of luxury homes instead of what you'd expect at a condo tower."

The Breakwater contains 19 units of townhomes at about 2,000 square feet each.

They feature 10-foot ceilings on the main floor, along with solid wood millwork and custom gourmet kitchens offering either quartz or granite countertops.

The units are also completely wired with a six-zone sound system.

Robbins says it was crucial for Three Point to offer such details because consumers can afford to take their time to pick and choose the exact home they want.

"Especially in today's market, it's very important," he says.

"When you look at our price per square footage, years ago this would buy you basic trimmings and finishes. Now, if you want to do a townhome, you have to do it right."

The Breakwater's units range from \$779,000 to \$999,000 each, and only six homes remain.

Being almost directly on the Victoria waterfront, the project also benefits from easy access to pathways linked to downtown and Beacon Hill Park, says Julseth.

The locale provides residents the perfect balance between work and play, she says, adding that's why the oceanview homes have drawn great interest from Albertans.

"We've had buyers from Alberta who love this because of its lock-and-leave set-up," says Julseth.

"They love the walkability of the city, which is made up of a number of mini-hearts. You don't have to drive to Costco to shop."