

Ex-cement plant site turned into solid idea

Victoria-area project to contain 3,200 units

MARTY HOPE
CALGARY HERALD

With a massive land remediation now complete, turning an abandoned cement plant into a mixed-use community just outside of Victoria, B.C. is one giant step closer to reality.

The remediation program on the 640-hectare site at Bamberton has received the required certificates of compliance for the project — along the way, winning three awards for its clean-up work, says Ross Tennant, co-founder and president of Three Point Properties.

"It was a big task, with more than 110,000 dumptruck loads of contaminated material (about 30 million cubic feet) moved and some 2,800 tonnes of steel reclaimed and recycled," he says. "My understanding is that it's been one of the largest private remediations done in B.C."

Following a series of open house gatherings with residents in the surrounding communities, Tennant says modifications were made to the plan for the proposed community.

Based on these discussions, Three Point Properties updated the rezoning application and filed it with the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

There are about 3,200 residential units in the application, which will be built over a period of 20 to 25 years.

The majority of the housing will be confined to the part of the property that was affected by the industrial activity.

As a result, Three Point will leave more than 340 hectares as park and trails, says Tennant. "That's nearly the size of Stanley Park."

Early in the application approval process, district officials decided to bring in a

consultant to complete a regional impact study of the application.

It is expected the study will be completed in November, when the district will again consider the application.

"My hope is that we will be able to begin construction in the late spring of 2009," says Tennant.

Three Point Properties has a thing about taking beaten and battered sites and nursing them back to life as healthy, sustainable communities.

Bamberton is the latest.

The former cement company town of Bamberton had long been empty of residents.

Until recently, there were only remnants of the factory still standing to recall the days between 1912 and 1980 when it was a going concern.

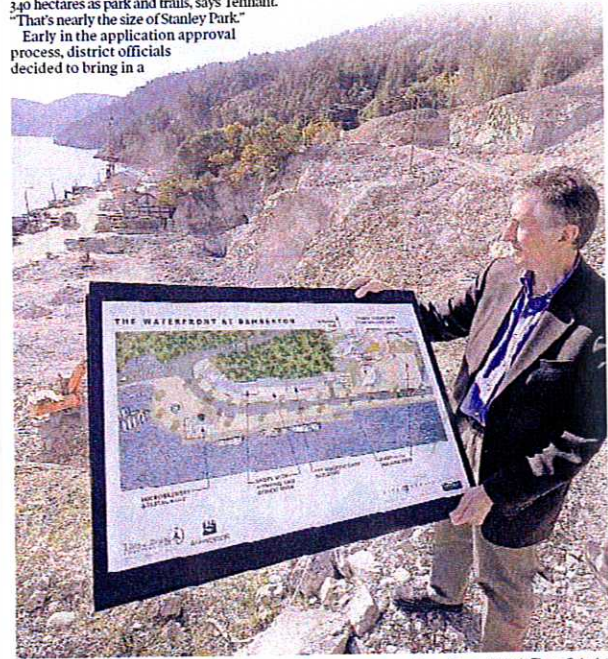
The origins of the company can be traced to 1904. In that year, Robert Pim Butchart founded a cement company at Tod Inlet near Victoria.

It was the only cement producing company west of the Great Lakes and proved to be a lucrative venture.

This early cement company was followed in 1912 by a second firm, The Portland Cement Construction Co. of London, England.

H.K.G. Bamber, the company's managing director, established the new company after a visit to B.C.

On his recommendation, a plant was constructed on the west shore of Saanich Inlet and the community that developed was named Bamberton in Bamber's honour.



Darren Stone, Victoria Times Colonist
Gwyn Symmons of Three Point Properties with the plans for the Bamberton project.