

## Langley homes rich with winning features

**Close to many amenities, Varsity showcases attention to detail**  
*SPECIAL TO THE SUN MICHAEL BERNARD*



*Varsity homes come with 14-centimetre-wide plank-style laminate flooring in the living and kitchen areas, as well as the entries.*

You could say that Chuck Hamilton spent most of his career in a luck-based business as a director of sales for the B. C. Lottery Corporation. But when it came to picking a new home, he left nothing to chance.

Hamilton has been a homeowner in Varsity, a condominium complex that will eventually have 231 units near downtown Langley, for more than 13 months. When he was looking, he made a point of taking along some expert help.

"My son is a facilities co-ordinator for a major corporation and he remodelled his own home, so he knows his stuff," Hamilton said.

He thinks Varsity is well built — and he's not alone.

"And my brother-in-law works for a fire- and flood restoration company and he also thinks Varsity is really well built and that they pay attention to detail," Hamilton said. "He said, for instance, they even puttied over the nail heads on the exterior walls so water won't get in. Those things are important because over the life of the building, it's those little things that make the difference."

Hamilton and his wife lived in a 1,400-square-foot rancher-style condominium in North Delta for more than 27 years. After she died five years ago, Hamilton stayed put, but decided last year that he wanted to downsize and move closer to his son and daughter-in-law in Langley.

After looking at more than 40 condos — some up to 15 years old — he made a discovery.

"I realized everything I was looking at was all in the same price range as Varsity," he said. "I thought if I am going to sell my place and move, why would I buy something that is 15 years old if it is the same price as something that is brand new?"

Built on a former elementary school site by Redekop and Kroeker, the Varsity homes will be broken up into three strata groups when the last of four phases is completed next year.

### Varsity

**Project location:** 20068 and 20078 Fraser Highway, Langley

**Project size:** Phase III and IV of a four-phase 231-suite development on a 1.4-hectare site. Junior one-bedroom to two-bedroom-plus-den homes range from 485 to 1,090 square feet

**Prices:** Junior one-bedroom homes from \$ 149,900, two-bedroom homes from \$ 249,900

**Monthly strata fees:** 22 cents a square foot

**Developer:** RKDI ( Varsity 2) Homes Ltd. and RKDI ( Varsity 3) Homes Ltd.

**Architect:** Keystone Architecture

**Interior designer:** Creative Design Works

**Sales centre:** 20068 Fraser Highway, Langley

**Sales contact:** Sandy Pastorek

**Hours:** noon to 5 p. m., Sat to Thurs

**Telephone:** 604- 539- 2200

**Website:** [liveatvarsity.com](http://liveatvarsity.com)

**Occupancy:** Move in now for Phase III, or move in fall 2015 for Phase IV



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The homes in Varsity, a four- storey complex in Langley, have nine- foot ceilings except on the top floor, where the living room areas stretch to 11 feet.



Homes at Varsity, a condo project in Langley by developer RKDI, come with showy balconies and sleek, well equipped kitchens.

two- bedroom-plus-den unit. The home totals 1,095 square feet, more than enough room for Hamilton, his Maltese poodle Miffy, an office for the occasional contract work he performs, and bedroom space for visiting relatives.

More than 80 per cent of Varsity buyers have been downsizers, said Sandy Pastorek, a Re/ Max agent who, along with Rennie Associates' Realtor Mike Cox, is selling homes at Varsity. "They like the largesize homes and the fact that when Phase IV is finished, we will have gates on both entrances," she said.

Buyers are also impressed that the four phases are broken up into three separate strata: Phases I and II, built three years ago, were put into one strata, while phases III and IV will each have their own strata corporation, she said.

"Anyone looking long- term realizes they will never get levied to repair anybody else's building. So they are strictly building their own contingency fund to care for their own building," Pastorek said. "A downsizer doesn't want to have to keep paying money out, and for an investor, that's the last thing that they want to be paying for — somebody's else's building that was done a few years before theirs was ...

"We are very close to Kwantlen ( Polytechnic University) and Trinity Western ( University) if someone is purchasing accommodation for their kids. The bus stop is right on Fraser Highway. The grocery is across the street and a half a block away. And there are lots of good restaurants, and it's about a 15- minute walk to Willowbrook Mall."

Another popular feature is that strata fees are relatively low at 22 cents per square foot. The fee reflects the absence of costly amenities such as fitness rooms or swimming pools, Pastorek said. Purchasers receive gas, hot water, garden maintenance, snow removal and common area janitorial for their fee. Each complex has an amenity room for booking.

roof with large overhangs that protect the balconies and patios from the weather, and extensive use of brick with batten and board accents.

All homes come with 14- centimetre- wide plank- style laminate flooring in the entry, kitchen and living room, nylon carpeting in the bedrooms and ceramic tile in the bathrooms. First-, second- and third- floor homes have nine- foot ceilings, while top- floor units come with 11- foot high ceilings in the living room areas. A signature feature in Redekop and Kroeker homes is the use of granite sills for all windows, something Pastorek said is also easy to wipe down. All windows come with faux wood blinds.

All kitchens feature granite countertops with a 3.8- centimetre square edge finish, alder shaker frame and panel- door cabinets, and undercabinet puck lighting. The double stainless steel sinks are undermounted with a polished Kohler pull- down faucet. Stainless steel appliances are standard with GE gas ranges and overhead microwaves and Samsung 500- litre french- door refrigerators with icemakers. Full- sized washers and dryers are also made by Samsung.

Bathrooms feature marble counters and granite countertops in the ensuite bathrooms. All bathrooms have under- cabinet lighting triggered by motion sensors and the bedrooms have built- in closet organizers.

In addition to downsizers and some first- time buyers, both Pastorek and Cox said the building has attracted investors who have discovered a secret about Langley — that the homes fetch rents not that much lower than downtown Vancouver. At \$ 149,900 for starting prices, that translates into an attractive rent- to- equity ratio, they said.

For a limited time, the developer is offering a \$ 10,000- to\$ 15,000 buyer bonus on all two- bedroom and two- bedroom- and- guest homes. It also is providing a free Telus package for one year worth \$ 1,300.

Hamilton purchased a ground- floor

The four- storey complex has a flat