

# Townhouses a neighbourly replacement

## 'Need to carefully fit' put a Tudor face on Oakridge project

Sun

Developer Craig Rowland — above, and up on the roof of the Carrington show home — knew it was important to be mindful of the decades- old residential character of the Vancouver neighbourhood of Oakridge when it came to inserting 30 new townhomes along a stretch of Oak Street between 45th and 46th avenues.

“ And as a developer, I appreciate the need to carefully fit into a neighbourhood and manage change, and to make the transition from the old to the new,” notes the Listraor Group principal, which is erecting the two- and three- bedroom homes, collectively called Carrington.

That neighbourhood has long been home to single- family detached residences, and Rowland says Listraor has tried to ensure that the attached addition will complement its character.

To that end, the two- and threebedroom homes will have oldworld Tudor detailing, something Rowland says reflects the architectural style of homes that would have been built in the area as far back as the 1930s.

As Craig Rowland sees it, it's not surprising that he should know how to make effective changes to a neighbourhood. After all, he worked on developing neighbourhoods for some 14 years before he became a developer.

Rowland, now the principal of The Listraor Group, worked as a city planner in Burnaby before moving to Vancouver and assuming a senior planning position that saw him involved in some of the city's most ambitious undertakings, including Concord Pacific's masterplanned development on the north shore of False Creek.

That work may have ended some time ago — Rowland left the Vancouver planning department almost 20 years ago to enter the development industry and eventually start Listraor — but he indicates it provided him with a sensitivity to development that has persisted to this day.

“ What we largely did as planners was to try to accommodate new development that was compatible with what was there so that we were managing change,” says Rowland, who also holds a degree in architecture.

“ And as a developer, I appreciate the need to carefully fit into a neighbourhood and manage change, and to make the transition from the old to the new,” he says.

These days, the “ old” that co n ce r n s Rowl a n d i s a n established neighbourhood in Oakridge, specifically, a s t r e t c h o f O a k S t r e e t b e t w e e n 4 5 t h a n d 4 6 t h Avenues. Here, where the roots of residential development stretch back decades, Rowland is installing the “ new:” a 30- townhouse project he calls Carrington.

The location, says Rowland, makes it somewhat typical of Listraor's six previous multi- residence undertakings in Vancouver and Burnaby.

“ We have focused on infill developments, ranging in size from 14 to 40 units, located in existing neighbourhoods. The objectives are to provide highly livable homes and gardens, quality construction and attractive architecture which fits into the character of existing neighbourhoods.”

The neighbourhood in which Carrington is rising h a s l o n g b e e n h o m e t o detached residences, and Rowland says his company has tried to ensure that the attached addition will complement its character.

To that end, the two- and three- bedroom homes — some with dens — will have old- world Tudor detailing, which Rowland says is reflective of homes that would have been built in the area as far back as the 1930s.

“ And in addition to that,” he says, “ the scale of the building is brought down by the steeply sloping roofs and by the brick finishes and by the individual front doors on the street... [ This] also creates the character — or extends the character — of the singlefamily neighbourhood.”

As a townhome project in a single- family neighbourhood, Carrington, agrees Rowland, is a classic example of the city of Vancouver's “ densification” initiatives.

Carrington, he says, “ implements the city's objective to provide housing for more people close to transportation, shopping, school, park and cultural amenities, while fitting into the context of existing neighbourhoods.

“ By fitting in, we mean the scale, building materials and landscaping is compatible with, or provides a transition to what is already in the neighbourhood and the privacy and sunlight access of existing houses is preserved.”

Carrington's character may suit its Oakridge neighbourhood, but that doesn't mean it's without a character all its own.

Interiors will have contemporary open plans, and many will have, not only private, gated gardens, but spacious roof decks as well.

Standard features include undermount kitchen sinks, mainlevel hardwood flooring, granite countertops, electric fireplaces and top- end stainless steel Bosch and Fisher Paykel appliances. Each of the homes will also be provided with two underground parking stalls.

“ I think the quality of the finishing is very special,” notes Rowland. “ We're a developerbuilder, so we're not just developers that are organizing money and creating homes. We're actually physically building them.

“ I have my own construction crew and site superintendents and we've been doing our own work for around 12 years. So we feel the quality is there throughout, in all of the things that you don't see, as well as what you do see.”

The Carrington homes came to market earlier this fall, and Rowland says they've drawn a steady flow of visitors, something he attributes to the product, the pricing, and the neighbourhood. ( He has sold five of the residences.)

“ The draws are many,” he says. “ There's an elementary school a block away. There's a park a block away. And then there's the accessibility to the airport, accessibility to downtown, accessibility to UBC... All of those things are within a 15- minute drive or a 10- minute walk. And there's also the shopping centre, Oakridge.”

Rowland also says his company — Listraor is named for a farm in Ireland that had been in his family for over 350 years — made an attempt to respond to the current real estate downturn by pricing the homes “ sharply.”

“ I think the price point is right,” he says. “ I think that what's happening right now is that people are financially conscious. What they used to do would maybe be buying on one or two visits.

“ Now they're coming back four, five or six times before they make a purchase. They have the time to do that and there's nothing wrong with that. It's a balanced market where people are making careful choices.”



The Tudor 'look and feel' of the Carrington new- home project reflects the architectural style of homes already in the neighbourhood, the developer says.



The Carrington show home has a main-level open floor plan. Floors in the living and dining areas are topped with hardwood, and ceilings rise to nine feet.



Standard features include undermount sinks, electric fireplaces and stainless steel Bosch and Fisher Paykel appliances.



The home's ensuite has a large walk-in shower, while the main bathroom is fitted with a tub; both have ceramic tile surrounds.



Developer Craig Rowland enters the rooftop deck of the Carrington show home, accessed by a pop- up skylight at the top of the second- level staircase.

