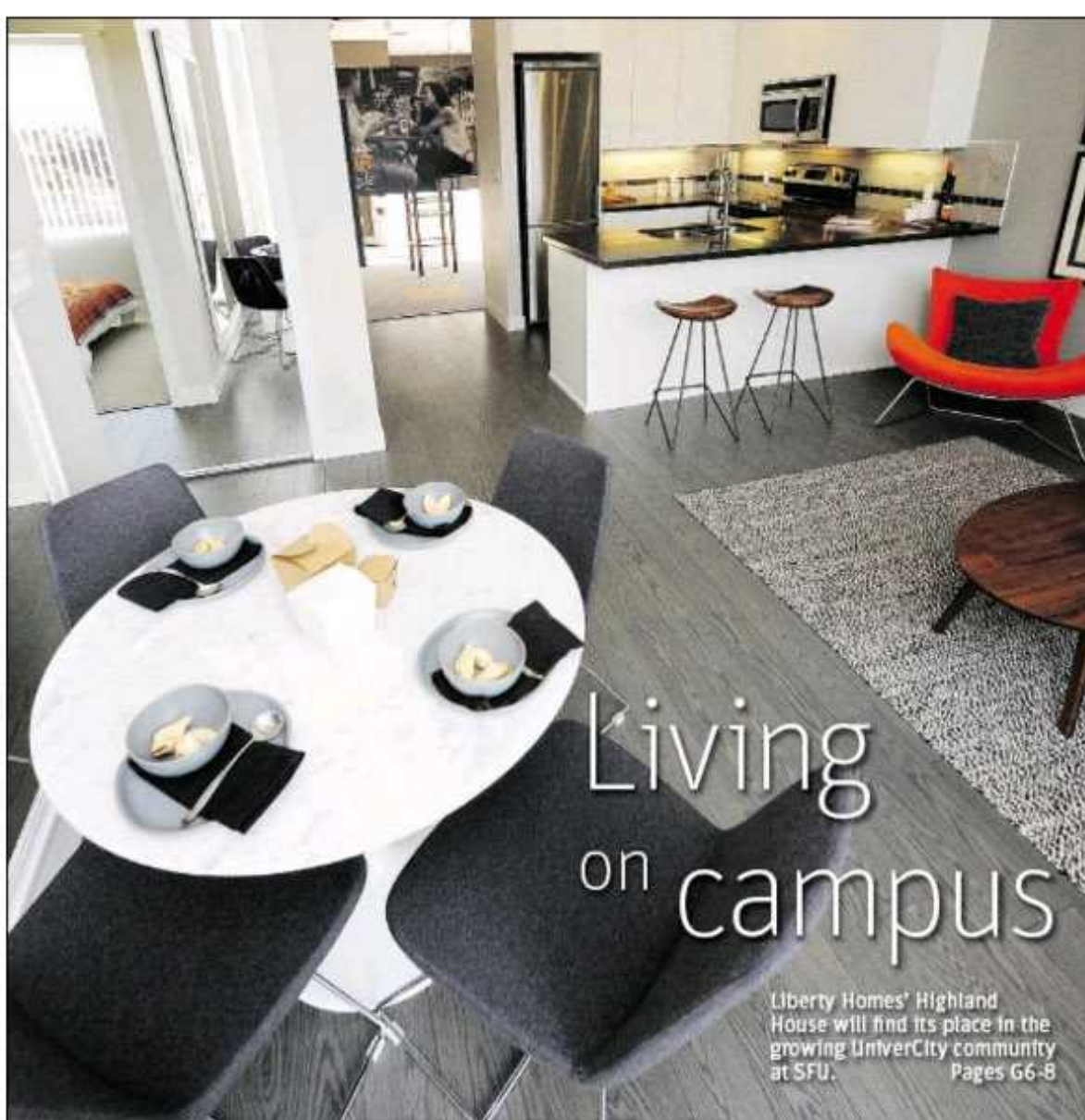


# Highland House 104 condos in an 12-storey tower by Liberty Homes

Mary Frances Hill

Sun

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RIC ERNST/ PNG

## Highland House

Project Location: 9025 Highland Court, Burnaby, UniverCity area

Project size: 104 suites (studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, and townhouses in a 12-storey apartment mid-rise)

Sizes: 400 sq. ft (studios) - 1,150 sq. ft (town houses)

Prices: \$209,900 - \$449,900

Developer: Liberty Homes

Architect: Dialog

Interior design: Different Designs Group

Sales centre: 9055 University High Street, Burnaby

Hours: Open daily, noon - 5 p.m.

Telephone: 778-331-0348

Web: [www.libertyhomes.ca/highlandhouse](http://www.libertyhomes.ca/highlandhouse)

Occupancy: June 2013

Rhea Hartt's decision to buy a one bedroom suite at Highland House, a pre-sale development in Burnaby Mountain's UniverCity community, was the result of a perfect storm.

Some years ago, Hartt and her husband and children moved into a detached home in Coquitlam built by Liberty Homes. Soon afterward, they were looking to invest in a suite to rent out, and bought a one-bedroom in the Hub, a low-rise in the Univer-City area, a block from Simon Fraser University.

So far, the landlord experience has gone well. In the four years they've owned the one-bedroom suite at the Hub, they've been landlord to two stable tenants.

So when they heard of Highland House, a Liberty Homes development to be built within a block of The Hub, they invested in a second one-bedroom suite. They trusted Liberty homes, and the opportunity to invest in another property at a perfect location happened at the right time.

It was not without some preparation, however.

"Before we bought our first home from Liberty, we asked around [to other buyers] and liked the response we were getting. We found out that Liberty has repeat buyers, and a lot of contractors complained about how picky Liberty is. I thought, 'that's the kind of developer I want to buy from,'" says Hartt, an engineer who works in downtown Vancouver.

Hartt's situation is typical of the buyers Liberty welcomed in its first weekend of sales - when the company saw 50 per cent of suites sold, says Jesse Nobbs-Thiessen, Liberty Homes' director.

Nobbs-Thiessen says the bulk of the units - studios, one-and two bedrooms - attract parents with growing or university-bound children, or buyers who are confident that a bustling population of students in the community will provide plenty of tenants in the long term.

"Though we're seeing a lot of young people looking to buy, we're looking mostly at the investor market. Parents are coming in with kids in tow, showing them where they'd like to live, [with intentions of] renting it out later."

With renters in mind, Nobbs-Thiessen chose the most durable materials available, such as resilient hardwood floors over a plywood base in every suite, and replaceable carpet tiles in the common areas.

Kitchens include sleek cabinets, compressed stone counters and a breakfast bar to match the cupboards' contemporary look. Stainless steel refrigerators and dishwashers are compact and space saving.

The master bedroom includes a walk-in closet large enough to store a hanging wardrobe and dresser drawer sets.

The 400-square-foot studios include a linear kitchen that lines one wall, and a short wall with sliding doors to offer bedroom privacy.

Nobbs-Thiessen calls it rental proof: a simple layout, long-wearing materials that can be easily replaced, strata fees that will include heat and hot water.

The building's exterior will sport a modern vertical orange stripe and be built with stepped levels, echoing late architect Arthur Erickson's vision. Residents of the building's upper levels will look down to the foliage of a green roof, or out to the views beyond. To date, the company has sold 70 out of 104 homes.

Highland House is just the newest development in a community that was first envisioned in 1963 by the renowned Erickson.

In 1996, with the transfer of land from SFU to the city of Burnaby, the city approved an Official Community Plan. It detailed a dense, mixed use community on about 65 hectares that allows for up to 4,536 residential units in two distinct neighbourhoods to the south and east of SFU's campus. Once it's fully built out, Univer-City will see more than 10,000 residents in the community, according to its website.

The project is located in an already busy community full of town houses, condos, an elementary school, daycare, caf s, lunch joints, a bank and a Nesters grocery store.

UniverCity residents are eligible for discounted use of SFU's library, gyms, sports programs and swimming pool.

A network of pedestrian pathways and bike trails link residences to shops and services and connect residents to hiking trails in the adjacent Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area.

Hartt says she was even more confident in the Highland House purchase after her husband attended the Hub's annual general meeting earlier this month.

"He told me he noticed that about 14 of the suite owners there were Liberty employees," she says.

"That says something about the confidence they have in their buildings."



The display suite at the Highland House in the Univercity neighbourhood has a feel that's both contemporary and comfortable. Ric Ernst/ PNG



Resilient hardwoods top the floors, while kitchens are fitted with sleek cupboards and compressed stone counters, and equipped with stainless steel appliances



A washer and dryer are within reach of the bedroom in the Highland House show home. The surrounding neighbourhood features caf s, banks, an elementary school and daycare, as well as a Nesters grocery store. Residents of the area are eligible for discounted use of Simon Fraser University's library, gyms, swimming pool and sports programs. Ric Ernst/ PNG

