

TOWNHOMES IN HIGH DEMAND

Thousands register for new 40-unit project

SHAWN CONNER



All the Oak + Park townhomes will have multiple areas for outdoor living.



Kitchens will be fitted with quartz countertops, tile backsplash and flat-panel cabinetry.



Oak + Park is a 40-home project from Alabaster Homes, which says it's 'the first significant townhome community to be built in Marpole.'

In a city where single-family homes are all but unaffordable for many people and where condos can often be seen as too small, townhomes have become an ideal form of residence for many Vancouver homebuyers.

On the west side, Alabaster Homes is

among the forefront of townhome development. The developer has already completed two projects in the area — Osler Residences and Shaughnessy — with 18 and 15 townhomes, respectively.

But Oak + Park, its latest project, is "the first significant townhome community to be built in Marpole," said Yosh Kasahara, director of sales and marketing for Alabaster. "It's a flagship project, not only for the company, but for the neighbourhood as well."

There's been considerable initial interest, with over 3,000 people registering for the 40-home project, which has just launched sales. "There's this unprecedented demand leading up to the launch of new product," Kasahara said.

The development's exterior will feature white brick and include decorative metal elements, and mullion and additional muntin bars that will give the windows a traditional look. Kasahara said Ciccozzi Architecture "really does an excellent job of this West Coast interpretation of classic design."

"Each unit has a sense of identity, from its own gate to a steep-pitched gabled element at the front door," Rob Ciccozzi said. "We brought in a high level of detail, higher than is typical for most townhomes."

The architect said he "wanted to bring a bit of the Shaughnessy character to Oak Street. That's where I came up with the traditional pitched roofs and some of the materials, like the brick and the siding."

"Having a front door and your own entry to your home is a key aspect of living in a townhome relative to, say, a condo building," Kasahara said, noting details like heritage-style black doorbells and door knockers.

The development is on Oak Street, flanked by Park Drive to the north and a lane a short distance from West 63rd Avenue to the south. Front entrances of the homes running along Oak face the street, while the front entrances of the

other homes face a courtyard that runs between the two halves of the development.



Saturday July 15, 2016

Marpole 'final piece to west side puzzle'



Each unit will have a sense of identity with its own gate and a 'steep-pitched gabled element at the front door,' says architect Rob Ciccozzi.



The kitchen, living and dining rooms on the main floor of Oak + Park townhomes feature extra-wide engineered hardwood flooring and nine-foot ceilings.

All townhomes will have three bedrooms and dens, and all have multiple areas for outdoor living — in front and back, along with a deck on the third level, outside the main bedroom. All the residences also have direct access from the underground parking level into the homes.

The outdoor living areas that face the courtyard are "generously sized," Kasahara said, and include privacy screens and natural gas hookups for barbecues.

Interiors feature two colour schemes, light and dark, for cabinetry and flooring. The main level, where the living, dining and kitchen areas are located, features extra-wide engineered hardwood flooring and nine-foot ceilings.

Kitchen features include quartz countertops, tile backsplash and flat-panel cabinetry. Appliances include a Bosch cooktop, separate wall oven and dishwasher, a Broan pullout hood fan and a

Fisher & Paykel refrigerator.

The second floor is given over to second and third bedrooms (each large enough to fit a queen-sized bed) and a den. The master bedroom and ensuite, with an outdoor deck, are on the third level. Ensuite features include Kohler fixtures, a unique "hextile" backing in a large standup shower, large-format floor tile and in-floor radiant heating. All homes come with central air-conditioning, high-efficiency hot water heaters and a basement space for storage.

The layouts of the four floor plans vary only slightly. The homes along Oak Street, for example, are smaller, ranging from 1,280 to just over 1,300 square feet, and "are more affordably priced," Kasahara said, in the \$1.1-million range.

Based on buyers of the Osler and Shaughnessy townhomes, Kasahara is expecting Oak + Park to attract young families.

"The key driver for them is the neighbourhood and the school catchment," he said. The development is near Sir Winston Churchill Secondary, a school with an international baccalaureate program that offers university-level courses to high school-age students. Oak Park is also nearby, along with the Marpole Oakridge Community Centre.

"Single-family homes have become impossibly unaffordable on the west side," Kasahara said.

"Townhomes have become the alternative of choice. When you look at the development happening surrounding this area, in Kerrisdale and Oakridge and the Cambie Corridor, Marpole was the final piece to the puzzle on the west side."

The developer realized this early enough to "take a significant position in terms of acquiring sites here," Kasahara said. "What we didn't see was the ramp-up in prices over the last few months. I think that took everybody by surprise."

Kasahara says there is still a lack of supply in the area, and the developer "would love" to build more and bigger projects there. But Marpole is still predominantly a single-family neighbourhood. "It really depends on what individual property owners are wanting to do with their homes."

Kasahara said Oak + Park was an important project. "It's such a prominent site. Everyone sees it when they're driving on Oak Street. We wanted to create

something that would be a lasting legacy for the company," he said.

Open house today and Sun., noon – 5 p.m.