

February 6, 2013



From left, David Chard, President Chard Development, Victoria mayor Dean Fortin, Victoria councillor Pam Madoff and Barry Scroggs, President of Farmers Construction, break ground at the Duet site in James Bay. Photograph by: LYLE STAFFORD, Times Colonist

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Chard Development started ripping up a Michigan Street parking lot in James Bay Tuesday to make way for its two-building Duet condominium project.

Duet, which features a eight-storey and four-storey buildings with a total of 90 suites, is Chard's fifth residential project in Victoria

Developer David Chard said the project, beside the James Bay fire hall at 640 Michigan St., has been in the works for seven years. He bought the parking lot in 2005 and worked with the James Bay Neighbourhood Association for several years on the design and scope of the project. He said the delay in bringing it to the market came down to that process and the weakness of the condo market in 2008 and 2009.

"We remain strong believers in Victoria, as we have been for the past decade," said Chard. "We launched our third downtown project, The 834, in 2009 when there was great uncertainty in the market. While these are times of nervousness and hesitation, we continue to see an ongoing demand and desire for new, quality housing in the city, especially in unique locations like Duet."

Duet is slated to be completed in the fall of 2014. The 90-unit project, designed by local architecture firm, de Hoog and Kierulf Architects and Vancouver's Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership, is 30 per cent sold. Suites in both buildings are available starting from \$219,000, with suite sizes ranging from 419 to 1,411 square feet.

"The opportunity to live in a new condo in a quiet residential neighbourhood with access to 200 acres of park at the end of your street, nearby transit and so close to downtown has really resonated with our purchasers," says Jeff Griffiths, vice-president of marketing for Chard.

Duet's signature amenity is a rooftop terrace complete with lounge and dining seating, and an outdoor BBQ kitchen.

Chard, which is also bringing its Sovereign project out of the ground in the downtown core, is also in the planning stages for the parking lot at 819 Yates St., a site the company bought in 2011.

The lot, next to the Empire Capitol 6 movie theatre complex, had been held by Dubai-based Emaar Properties, the group that built the world's tallest building — the 828-metre Burj Khalifa in Dubai — at a cost of \$1.5 billion.

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