

## The Block 32 condos in an 3-level by Park Lane Homes (Biltmore) Ltd.

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### The facts

What: The Block, 32 townhouses.

Where: 450 East 11th Ave., Vancouver

Developer: Park Lane Homes (Biltmore) Ltd.

Sizes: Two bedroom plus den to three bedrooms plus den, 1,192 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft.

Prices: Starting at \$569,900.

Open: Presentation Centre and show home at 458 East 11th Ave. Open from noon to 5 p.m. daily except Friday.

More info: [www.lifeontheblock.ca](http://www.lifeontheblock.ca)

The evolved townhome in one of Vancouver's oldest, urban neighbourhoods.

That's the basic idea behind The Block, a 32-unit development in a leafy corner of SoMa, or South Main. And so far, the idea seems to be resonating.

Despite the grand opening still a week away on May 30, developer ParkLane Homes has already sold eight of the 32 townhomes, with another 10 sales pending.

"We said we'd be thrilled with 10 [sold] by the end of May and we're already there," said Kirsta Shirreff, ParkLane marketing manager.

Shirreff says it's the location and well-designed layout that's driving sales.

In an area dominated by new condos, the developer has honed in on a niche townhome project with the convenience of being close to Main Street. ParkLane Homes, which has a tradition of developing master-planned communities and single-family homes, also played to its strength by incorporating the most popular features of a suburban home into an urban townhouse.

That means full-sized kitchen appliances, large windows for lots of light, walk-in closets and ensuite master bedrooms.

The architects also got clever with carving outdoor space on every level. Each townhome features a ground-floor patio, a Juliet balcony on the second floor, a sundeck on the third floor off the master bedroom and a rooftop deck.

"We took an urban townhome and evolved it.

"Quite often, the townhomes in Vancouver feel very long and narrow but because of our footprint, we got more of a square shape," explained Shirreff.

The development even offered several townhomes with rentable, basement suites -- although those units have already been sold.

The homes facing 11th Avenue and Guelph Street have the added advantage of being surrounded by mature trees, giving homeowners unexpected privacy.

Meanwhile, the other 19 townhomes face an inner courtyard.

The smallest home still available is 1,192 square feet and the largest is 1,603 square feet.

The show home, at about 1,600 square feet, features nine-foot ceilings on the main floor and a remarkably large master bathroom with his-and-hers sinks.

Buyers can also count on easy access to parking with a back door leading directly to an attached, underground parking spot.

Located east of Kingsway, between Prince Edward and Guelph Streets, The Block is within walking distance of everything you need, from restaurants and shops to supermarkets and transit.

And while SoMa tends to be billed as an "up-and-coming" neighbourhood filled with one-of-a-kind boutiques, it's also one of Vancouver's oldest and most diverse communities. The area is home to long-established staples such as Congee Noodle House on Broadway, Hong Kong-style bakery Kam's and a Middle Eastern market up on Main Street.

"I love the walkability. We walk everywhere," said Shirreff, herself a Mount Pleasant resident. "And this just feels really real. I love the mix of old and new."

And what about the all-important "P" word?

The homes still available start at \$569,900 and the most expensive tops at \$815,900, excluding GST. Nearly all the homes are priced under \$500 per square foot.

Cristy Edmonds, general sales manager with ParkLane Homes, said the prices are reflective of the current buyers' market.

"The alternative in this price point is to go to a really old home where you have to do a lot of work and not everyone wants to do that," she said.

So far, The Block is mainly attracting condo-dwellers looking for more space. They tend to be either young, professional couples or young families with small children, said Shirreff.

Occupancy is expected by October 2009.



Nearly all the homes at The Block are priced under \$500 per square foot. Photograph by: Nick Procylo, The Province



The Block is located in South Main, one of Vancouver's oldest and most diverse communities.



Popular features borrowed from a suburban home include full-sized kitchen appliances.