

New West gets a Royal welcome

'Last piece of the puzzle' falls into place at Onni's Victoria Hill

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SPECIAL TO THE SUN



Kitchens at The Royal will have composite stone counters, ceramic tile backsplashes and ambient pendant lighting.



The Royal's bathrooms will have deep soaker tubs, featuring ceramic tile surrounds and frameless glass-enclosed showers.



The display suite at The Royal shows off the living areas Onni Group is building into the units, and also gives an idea of the spacious views the units will have of green space or the Fraser River.



The Royal is a new development comprising two four-storey buildings in Onni Group's Victoria Hill community in New Westminster. Occupancy is set to begin in the fall of 2017.

six townhomes Project location: 26 East Royal Ave., New Westminster Residence size: 610 to 1,385 square feet Prices: From \$309,900 Developer: Onni Group of Companies Architect: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture Inc. Interior designer: Onni in-house interior design Sales centre: 20 East Royal Ave., New Westminster Hours: Noon to 6 p.m., Saturday to Thursday Telephone: 604-523-0733 Website: onni.com/theroyal Sales began: February 2016 Occupancy: Fall 2017

Buyers can have it all in the Victoria Hill community in New Westminster, Onni sales manager Sam Jenkins boasts.

"There are finished homes available now in our Lookout project, and for anyone who may need a longer timeline — perhaps to sell an existing home, or to save up for a down payment — there are the homes in The Royal," he says. "The Royal is the last piece of the puzzle in this master-planned community."

Jenkins says they wanted to ensure the individual homes had widespread appeal when it came to the interior design. To that end, finishes are cleanly contemporary, with composite stone countertops, white gloss upper cabinets and rift-cut oak veneer lowers in the kitchen. Wide-plank laminate floors give way to carpeting in the bedrooms and large-format tile in the bathrooms.

"The homes are open concept, so that you can interact with each other, whether you're in the living room or in the kitchen," he says on a tour through the show suite. "We're really seeing a lot of

demand for larger homes, which are more affordable here than in some other areas of the region."

The additional room in the homes allows for nice touches, such as a double sink vanity in the master ensuite, and a flex space that's adaptable as a home office, craft area or reading nook.

The show suite has its two bedrooms separated by the central living area, which is ideal for privacy. A sizable balcony area will also allow for views of the Fraser River or green space, depending on the direction and height of a home. Residents will also have access to a 3,000-square-foot rooftop deck with a barbecue area, outdoor lounge and artificial lawn.

Onni began working on the Victoria Hill neighbourhood a decade ago, with projects encompassing highrise towers, townhomes, low-rise condominiums and restoration of heritage buildings on the 26-hectare parcel. Jenkins says that means there is a lovely mix of demographic groups already on site. They include young families, mature couples who have sold single-family homes, and professionals moving from other areas of Metro Vancouver.

So far, most of the interest in the homes at The Royal seems to be stemming from firsttime homebuyers attracted by the pricing — homes start at \$309,900 — as well as downsizers drawn to some of the larger residences.

Jenkins says there is also a small element of family-style investing, where parents are buying a larger unit for themselves and a one-bedroom home for a child to grow into within a few years.

Architect Taizo Yamamoto, principal of Yamamoto Architecture, says the shape of The Royal was determined, in part, by site conditions.

"The site was very informative because it's quite steep and interesting, with the curve of the street on the upper side, and The Lookout building with openspace on the other," Yamamoto says.

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feel more like backyards than what one would typically find in an urban format.

Putting the last piece of the puzzle in place has also allowed the final vision for the site to come together. A big pedestrian plaza between The Royal and The Lookout provides a communal gathering space for the larger neighbourhood, and creates a direct link down to the Great Lawn — an open portion of green space at the south end of Victoria Hill.

Residents willing to go on a bit of a ramble can walk to the amenities of Queen's Park via the McBride Boulevard pedestrian overpass. They can also walk to Memorial Park or venture into the Glenbrook Ravine. Just above The Royal is a fully landscaped pond and grove of heritage trees. A series of bike and pedestrian paths run both east-west and north-south through the entire parcel.

The nearby River Market offers restaurants, shopping and a wide range of entertainment. More shopping, banking and other amenities are close as well. There are several elementary schools, New Westminster Secondary and Douglas College in the neighbourhood. Sky-Train commuters can either walk 15 minutes to the nearest station, or wait for a community shuttle.

"It really is everything people are looking for," Jenkins says. "You're close to everything, but you're tucked away from the hustle and bustle of downtown in all of this green space."



Project name: The Royal at Victoria Hill

Project size: 63 homes in two four-storey wood-frame buildings, including six townhomes

Project location: 26 East Royal Ave., New Westminster

Residence size: 610 to 1,385 square feet

Prices: From \$309,900

Developer: Onni Group of Companies

Architect: Taizo Yamamoto, Yamamoto Architecture Inc.

Interior designer: Onni in-house interior design

Sales centre: 20 East Royal Ave., New Westminster

Hours: Noon to 6 p.m., Saturday to Thursday

Telephone: 604-523-0733

Website: onni.com/theroyal

Sales began: February 2016

Occupancy: Fall 2017



Bedrooms in Onni Group's The Royal development will have Berber-style carpeting, while living and dining areas and flex rooms will have wide-plank laminate flooring.



"I tried to emphasize the slope by creating strong horizontal datums with long expansive balconies — they offset the grade and elevation changes, and picked up the vertical lines introduced in The Lookout and The Whittaker projects nearby," Yamamoto adds.

In short, he was able to take the negative space left by The Lookout and use that to push the envelope and footprint of The Royal, dovetailing them neatly. The slope of the hill has created a number of private open spaces, which