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AWARD





Swallow's Landing

by Laurie Jones

Nestled on the highest point of Victoria's Inner Harbour sits Swallow's Landing, one of the city's newest and most unique developments. The nine-storey twin towers offer spectacular views from each of the spacious suites that range from 1,250 to 4,000 square feet.

"When we bought the site, we had a little over five acres, and part of the agreement with the city was to split the property in half, and gift part of it to the Nature Conservancy of Canada as a public park," says David Price, president of Mandalay Developments Ltd. The Garry Oak meadow at the bottom of the property that sloped down to the ocean was virtually untouched. "Among all the other benefits of living at Swallow's Landing, the residents can look out and see a Garry Oak forest just outside of their balconies."

Swallow's Landing is steps away from the Victoria Harbour Ferry, shopping and the Westsong Walkway, which runs from downtown Victoria to the West Bay Marina. The large units were marketed to a 55-plus, affluent demographic and sales were brisk. "We met our targets with the East Tower, and expect the same from the West Tower – which have an average square footage of 1,600 square feet," says Price.

"When I met with Paul Merrick, our architect, I instructed him to design suites for people who wanted to step down from a single family residence, but didn't want to compromise on the size or quality."

The interior designs of the suites are almost all custom fit to suit the owners' personal tastes. "We have 98 suites in the building and 63 different floor plans," says Price. "We let people customize their suite, within reason, by moving or removing walls, and choosing from eight colour boards for the bathrooms and six colour boards for the kitchens for a combination of 14 possible options." On top of that, Price says buyers were able to swap between the room options so almost every suite is custom to the residents' desire.

"It is an extraordinary site that has a substantial history," says Paul Merrick, principal of Merrick Architecture Ltd. "It was originally the property of a moneyed land owner in Victoria, who gifted the land to the Salvation Army. They then built a care home on the top of the acreage."

Although this is a tower development, measures were taken to mitigate the appeared height of the buildings. "It's developed such that from the water, it reads as a residential structure

that blends in well with that area of Esquimalt," he says. "The access core is from the road side, so every suite is perpendicular to the water views. The units

LOCATION

847 Dunsmuir Road
Victoria, B.C.

OWNER/DEVELOPER

Mandalay Developments Ltd.

CONTRACT MANAGER

Telbay Developments

ARCHITECT

Merrick Architecture – Borowski Lintott
Sakumoto Fligg Limited

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd.

MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Hirschfield Williams Timmins Ltd.

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

RFA Consulting Electrical Engineers
Inc.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Design North Landscape
Architecture

TOTAL AREA

186,000 square feet

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST

\$86 mwillion





PHOTOS: MIK WEST

are played to look past neighbours and get a panoramic visual of Victoria's harbour." Natural light was incorporated as the stairwell and hallways are visible to the outside to the grounds and north side of the property.

The balance of the site will encompass four to five private homes that are urban in their arrangement but not attached, such as townhouses. Also in this area are several trees of significant size that were kept. "We engaged an arborist to ensure the building could be done while working around these established trees," says Merrick.

The buildings are fully rain screened using an electronic moisture monitoring system that was designed by Detec Monitoring, a company that is based in Victoria. "We have approximately 900 zones throughout the building that can monitor water penetration of the envelope within inches," says Price.

With such attention to detail in this luxury complex, the number of components and complexity of the job is far beyond what a standard condominium would be, says Don Sargent, owner of Telbay Developments Ltd. "Within the interior décor options, particularly for the kitchen, we have four different cabinet colours, four different hardwood floor combinations, and literally

hundreds of different tile combinations," he says. While this has aided in the sales of these suites, it was an interesting challenge to coordinate purchases of supplies for such a variety of colours and product choices.

Other luxury details include in-floor heating systems, gas fireplaces, stainless-steel appliances in the gourmet kitchen, Bosch washer and dryer, tempered glass shower surround, and for out-of-town company, Swallow's Landing offers two furnished guest suites. Sheer weave roller blinds and tempered glass balcony railings ensure constant access to the amazing views.

Respecting the natural surroundings in the landscaping efforts was crucial. "Our landscape design incorporated native grasses around the building, native trees and possibly new Garry Oak trees to blend in with those already in existence," says Stefan Luchinger, owner of Design North Landscape Architecture. "In the courtyard, a water feature is in place along with mass planting of shrubs and perennials that complement the paved patios, planters and benches." He adds that the intent was to create an interesting landscape for residents in addition to the Garry Oak meadow. "This area also leads the eye out to the view of the ocean and activity in the bay."

Luchinger says the landscape architecture reflects the unique design of the buildings. "There are a lot of angles and as 80 per cent of the landscaping is in the courtyard, we wanted that to be equally unique. We added regular grass and sod which would be manicured, but on the outside of the buildings we tried to keep it fairly natural so the feel of the landscape coming up from the water would blend into the residences." Luchinger says that it was enjoyable working on a project that incorporated a portion of the original land as a park, which was an inspiration to his designs.

As the ever-decreasing availability of land is developed in Victoria, residents of the still-growing city have a new choice in luxury living that is Swallow's Landing. ■