



Planning pays off

Innovative features part of The Wedge Woods

MARTY HOPE
CALGARY HERALD

It took more than two years of planning before the first clump of dirt was moved for an innovative condo project on Calgary's west side.

The Wedge Woods in New Discovery by Statesman Group is going to be much more than just another typical multi-family apartment project. It is going to be unique in many ways.

Arborists were brought in to designate which stands of trees could be removed, and vegetation experts studied the various species to ensure preservation.

A different construction method was employed to protect the delicate bottom lands while at the same time speeding construction of what will be a 578-unit, three-phase apartment complex.

Statesman has hired Mega Building Systems of Vancouver — which has its own patented system of panelized wall sections made of lightweight galvanized structural steel — as builder.

MBS also uses a 20-inch-deep, open-web floor system that allows plumbing and elec-

trical runs to be installed more easily. Steel isolation beams above load-bearing walls reduce sound transmission while providing fire-rated separation between spaces.

"There were three reasons why we decided to go with steel and concrete construction," says Statesman vice-president Brad Milne. "The first and foremost was that, because we are building in the trees, we wanted to use non-combustible products."

Building codes also now require that buildings five storeys or more must be constructed using non-combustible components.

Another factor is that the MBS system is new to Calgary's residential sector. Statesman just wanted to try it, says Milne.

Two years ago, Statesman's wood-frame Waterford project in the inner-city community of Eriton was destroyed by fire, leaving more than 300 residents homeless until the complex was rebuilt and re-occupied a year ago.

"This is not the result of the fire at our Waterford project," says Milne. "We had been working on plans for this before the fire occurred."

THE BUYER

Grant Smillie, 41.
BACKGROUND: The industrial accounts manager for Westburne Electric moved to Calgary from Edmonton more than two years ago and owned a townhouse in the Marda Loop district. After reading about The Wedge Woods, he purchased a unit. Until construction ends, he is living with his brother.
DEVELOPER: Statesman Group.
PROJECT: The Wedge Woods in New Discovery.
BUILDER: Mega Building Systems.
LOCATION: New Discovery, in the southwest.

Mikael Kjellstrom, Calgary Herald

Condo buyer Grant Smillie stands in the forest near The Wedge Woods of New Discovery, Chateau 1. More than half the land for the project is to include stands of trees.

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PAYS: Nine floorplans available

Statesman purchased the land for The WedgeWoods from United Communities, which is developing the New Discovery community.

Even as MBS crews continue to erect the first phase of the unique complex, 60 per cent of the first 207 units have already been sold — with possessions scheduled to begin late next spring, says sales representative Mike Sali.

The WedgeWoods will have nine floorplans, ranging from one-bedroom, one-bathroom units to those with two bedrooms, two bathrooms and den. Units are 800 to 1,466 square feet and priced from \$167,000 to \$299,000, including GST.

Amenities include a two-storey garden atrium at the building entrance, windows in the elevators overlooking the surrounding natural park, private recessed balconies and heated underground parking.

Grant Smillie, who has purchased one of the units in the first phase, was recently touring the job site.

While he was impressed with the construction methods and other unique aspects of the development, Smillie says it was the area that attracted him.

"I love this area of the city and this is going to be a solid investment," says the 47-year-old industrial account manager for Westburne Electric. "I like mountain biking, I'm a member at Redwood Meadows golf club and I'm closer to Bragg Creek — one of my favourite areas."

Smillie looked at projects in other areas of the city, but he kept coming backing to The WedgeWoods.

"For me, it was a lifestyle choice," he says. "Besides, to get into this part of the city and to be surrounded by forest for \$200,000 is great."

Frank Castronuovo, director of construction for Statesman, says the complex is being built with as little disturbance as possible to the forested area surrounding it.

"We purchased 20 acres (eight hectares) of land for The WedgeWoods, but 13 (5.2 hectares) of that will remain



Construction workers move a modular galvanised steel stud wall during the construction of the project.

undisturbed," he says. "Griffith Woods has thousands of ever-green trees in it, some as old as 100 and 200 years old."

To further ensure surrounding flora and fauna were not affected, MBS brought in several self-erecting cranes that have been strategically positioned so that little relocation is required to maintain the construction schedule.

A three- to four-metre area has been cleared around the foundation to allow the cranes to be moved when it becomes necessary — again, staying inside the do-not-disturb area.

The MBS system is quicker to install and reduces the amount of maintenance required, says company president Kelly Petersen.

"Compared to wood framing,

settlement on the site is reduced," he says.

"Therefore, there are no nail pops in drywall, no warping of studs and no mould. And because everything is pre-fabricated, the construction time-frame is reduced considerably."

The MBS crews were on site in mid-April to begin erecting the first of three buildings for Statesman, and by August they will have completely closed in the five floors.

They will return next spring to begin work on the second building.

"To be able to do something of this size with limited impact on the surrounding forest is unique, and for our buyers, it's an opportunity to live in a rural setting inside the city," says Milne.



Photos: Mikael Kjellstrom, Calgary Herald
 Above, a worker lays down metal decking at The WedgeWoods of New Discovery, Chateau I. Left, construction manager Frank Castronuovo at the site.

IN SHORT

PROJECT: The 578-unit WedgeWoods in New Discovery.

PRICE: The apartments range in size from 800 to 1,466 square feet and are priced from \$167,000 to \$299,000, including GST. Condo fees are from \$79 to \$141 per month.

DIRECTIONS: From Highway 8, turn south at the traffic lights onto Discovery Ridge Boulevard. Exit the traffic circle and go down the hill. Turn left to the sales centre on Discovery Ridge Lane.

HOURS: The sales centre is open from noon to 6:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and from noon to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays. It is closed Fridays.

WEBSITE:
www.statesman.ca/lifestyle/wedgewoods.htm