

A zero-emissions mid-rise project comes to Markham

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EverHome's three midrises – two with five storeys plus and another with eight – form a U-shape around a central courtyard. PHOTO BY PHOTO COURTESY OF PUREBLINK

Article content

Shakeel Walji has been a real estate developer for a while — 14 years, to be exact — but this time round, The Sher Corporation principal wanted to make a different kind of impact, by creating housing with a lighter environmental imprint. “We really did not want to add more carbon to an already-taxed environment,” he says.

At EverHome, the Markham-based, multi-building residential development fronting McCowan Road, “going green” will take the form of a geothermal heating and cooling system. “It provides the building with a zero-emission system that harnesses heat from the earth as a source.” Unlike wind or solar heat, geothermal rarely fluctuates and it provides a sustainable and affordable alternative to fossil fuels and electricity.

Since EverHome is seeking a LEED Silver designation, the project has incorporated a range of environmentally friendly features, including green roofs, Solarban 70 glass to minimize heat loss, and a rainwater collection system that will irrigate its central courtyard and can also be held as a back-up emergency water source.

Located at 9704 McCowan Rd., two five-storey mid-rise buildings and an eight-storey mid-rise with retail on the ground floor form a U-shape around a central courtyard, “so the building actually has two faces,” says Katie Kuzan, senior associate at Kohn Partnership Architects. “The street presence along McCowan addresses the street, but then the other one is for residents from the inside of the courtyard, which in itself is sort of a secret garden.”



The boxy Lego-like shapes that adorn the facade create visual interest through “a lot of shadow play,” says Katie Kuzan, senior associate at Kohn Partnership Architects. PHOTO BY PHOTO COURTESY OF PUREBLINK

Kuzan describes the central courtyard as the development's "crowning jewel," a quiet place for residents to socialize or for kids to play. "It will be landscaped as well – a little oasis in the city of Markham," she says. "It's a place for privacy, but also for community."

Buyers can choose from a range of suite styles ranging from two-storey townhouse-style units to traditional condo suites to double-height loft-style units. The architects at Kohn sought to design a space that highlighted community interaction between residents occupying the 131 suites.

"That was the essential focus of the design," says Sean Lawrence, partner at Kohn Partnership Architects. "This is a place where you will come to know your neighbours." Lawrence explains that the ground-floor units have to be accessed via the courtyard, encouraging dialogue and interaction as people come home from work or just relax outside at the end of the day.

The exterior features what Kuzan calls a "broken and articulated façade" – Lego-like structures that protrude from the outer walls like modular boxes. "The push and pull of these box shapes not only provides visual interest, but also causes a lot of shadow play," says Kuzan. "So you'll see throughout the day, the building is very dynamic. It looks different on the exterior depending where the sun is."

Materiality was another point of focus. "We wanted all the materials that residents had contact with to be made of natural elements like wood," explains Kuzan. "Usually in a condo you have glass and aluminum everywhere. What's unusual here is our courtyard units have solid wood doors, which is pretty rare in a condo structure."

With interiors designed by The Walsh Group, a modern and sleek aesthetic carries through the open-concept suites. For inspiration, The Walsh Group took cues from the variable exterior façade and brought the two-toned colour theme inside, especially in kitchens, where it carries into the cabinetry.

Smooth ceilings with a minimum nine-foot height reflect the natural light that comes in from floor- to-ceiling windows customized for each suite. In the penthouses, ceilings can go as high as 18 feet. In the kitchens, a simple yet eye-catching herringbone backsplash defines the space. All the kitchens also have European appliances and showcase unique movable islands. Flooring is wide plank laminate.

The crisp, clean look carries into designer bathrooms with white porcelain tile and quartz countertops. Units are priced beginning in the mid-\$800,000s for approximately 700 square feet. The two-level penthouses start at \$1.2 million.



The architects at Kohn put community interaction between residents occupying the project's 131 suites at the centre of their design plan. PHOTO BY PHOTO COURTESY OF PUREBLINK

A separate pavillion in the west block of the development houses two levels of amenities, including a lounge, dining area, wellness gym, screening room and kids play area. "We don't anticipate a particular type of buyer here per se but we have something for everyone," says Walji. "For couples with young children, we have a creative, indoor play space for kids that we call a 'plush space' – everything is padded and safe for young kids and toddlers."

The project's north residential block houses the lobby and a billiards room, while the south block has rooms for table tennis. Though architects designed the central courtyard with plenty of bike storage – and a designated bike repair station where residents can "pump up tires and oil gears," a parking lot with EV charging for vehicles runs underground along the development.

But no worries if residents don't own a car or a bike. EverHome sits at a transit hub with easy access to TTC, York Region Transit and Go stations: Mount Joy, Centennial and Markham Go are close by.

Suites begin in the low \$800,000. For more information, visit www.everhomemarkham.ca.

Three things

The popular Angus Glen public club — which has played host to several Canadian Opens and the 2015 Pan Am Games — is in the neighbourhood, offering a range of courses from beginner to challenging. *10080 Kennedy Rd.*

Kim Dinh Vietnamese Restaurant serves up classic pho, but appetizers — deep-fried minced shrimp on sugar cane (\$9.50), fried lemongrass chicken wings (\$9.25) — are the real score. *9570 McCowan Rd.*

A short walk away, Berczy Park South is outfitted with a baseball field, playground, basketball court, tennis courts and a soccer field. But its is a tricked-out skatepark with concrete waves and jump-off points for all levels of skateboarders.