

Emporio

by Jerry Eberts

Concert has done it once again. The company's new Emporio in Richmond, B.C., is an elegant combination of a 16-storey tower and eight three-level townhouses, all within walking distance of some of the finest shops and attractions in the city.

What is particularly clever about this development is that the three-storey townhouses surround and conceal a three-level parkade, giving 130 parking stalls in a part of the Lower Mainland in which digging below ground level can be a soggy problem.

"The site is a mid-block site on the

west side of Buswell Street," says Lisa Lock, director of development for Vancouver-based Concert Properties Ltd. "The tower was located to the west of the existing, adjacent Perla building in order to maximize privacy and view potential. The three-storey residential L-shaped wing with city homes was designed to both screen the parking and animate the street and entry passageway to the tower."

Concert has a lot of experience developing and acquiring multi-family condominiums, residential rental homes, resort, seniors' living commu-

nities and commercial and industrial properties throughout B.C., Alberta and Ontario. The company was founded in 1989 on the principle of building affordable, quality homes. Interestingly, it is owned exclusively by union and management pension plans.

Larry Doyle, principal with the newly formed firm of Lawrence Doyle Young & Wright Architects Inc., was architect on the Emporio development.

"We worked with Concert and [associate architect] Richard Henry to get the plans right," says Doyle. "Concert wants buildings that they can

be proud of and though it was a rather tight site – it's not a very wide property – we were able to come up with a good plan.

"We had to be careful to get clearance of the property lines, of course, and we also had to be careful with the foundation because we were butted up close to another building. I'd say the project went very well."

Richard Henry, of Vancouver-based Richard Henry Architect Inc., says it was fantastic working with Larry Doyle: "We've worked together many times with Concert."



PHOTOS COURTESY CONCERT PROPERTIES LTD.



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– TARA WELLS

Henry put together the building's conceptual layout, including figuring out the proportions of the tower and base elements, including the townhouses.

"For the design of the townhouses, we used grade-oriented units to create a street scale and coincidentally screen the parking," says Henry. "We set the tower back from the townhouses so that there is a deep entrance courtyard, which is landscaped."

"The building has been very well received. It's more of a boutique building and it is in a great location just off Number 3 Road. The Richmond Public



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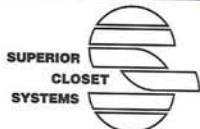
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Photo courtesy: Concert Properties



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Market is just a block away.”

And with the completion of the Canada Line rapid transit system in November 2009, Richmond will be a comfortable 25-minute train ride from downtown Vancouver. Emporio is situated close to the Brighthouse Station, giving residences the option of convenient transportation into Vancouver without the hassle and cost associated with driving.

Henry describes Emporio's look as “derived from a contemporary interpretation of classical elements.”

Tara Wells, principal with Portico Design Group Ltd. of Richmond, says Concert wanted to appeal to a different market with the property, using “classic lines and colours; nothing that could be considered ultra-contemporary.

“Concert saw this building as appealing to a slightly more mature market, people perhaps 30-plus years old,” she says. “We used neutral tones, greys and beiges. But we also used zebrawood, which is fairly exotic, and there are cut-pile carpets and tile flooring throughout.

“The lobby is quite magnificent, with a large fireplace and a two-storey ceiling. There is also a very nice amenity room with a full kitchen, a television lounge and a fitness centre.”

Ken McKillop, an associate with Vancouver's Durante Kreuk Ltd., was landscape architect for Emporio. Involved right from the early design stages, he wanted to relate the building to its site and the neighbourhood.

“The city homes are right at ground level, with doors opening onto the street,” says McKillop. “It helps give the development a sort of neighbourhood feeling.

“There is a podium level on top of the fourth floor that is an outdoor amenity,” he says. “It's a garden terrace, with access for all residents. Each of the residential suites have generous patios with planters for privacy.”

A fire access lane that cuts through the property has a water feature that looks quite beautiful from above.

Also on the ground level, there is a common green area, says McKillop, “with a semi-formal grass planting,

LOCATION

6351 Buswell Street
Richmond, B.C.

OWNER/DEVELOPER

Concert Properties Ltd.

ARCHITECT

Lawrence Doyle Young &
Wright Architects Inc.

ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT

Richard Henry Architect

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Bosa Construction Inc.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

Glotman Simpson Consulting
Engineers

MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Sterling Cooper & Associates

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

Nemetz (S/A) & Associates Ltd.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Portico Design Group Ltd.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Durante Kreuk Ltd.

TOTAL AREA

101,929 square feet

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST

\$22 million

trellises and benches, very inviting for all the residents. It's well-composed and restful and also beautiful to look down on from the tower suites. And there is a kids' play area. Bosa Construction was very helpful in making appropriate areas available.”

Marc Allaire, vice-president construction for Bosa Development Inc., says his company acted once again as general contractor for Concert.

“We were involved from start to finish,” says Allaire. “It was a good project. We used cast-in-place concrete, with exterior concrete walls and brick around the bottoms of the townhouses.

“Inside the suites there are very good finishing touches, including granite countertops and gas ranges.”

Allaire says his Burnaby-based company has had a long-standing relationship with Concert: “We do the budgets at the front-end and oversee all construction. It's a good way to work.” ■



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