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## Bohemian lifestyle beckons

Bohemian development will include condos, rental suites and plenty of commercial space

BY FELICITY STONE, VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 8, 2013



Kitchens feature integrated fridges and dishwashers behind wood-grain cabinets, granite countertops and backsplash.

For years the street that time forgot — at least, as far as development is concerned — East Hastings is suddenly on the radar, especially where it intersects McLean Drive. The Waldorf Hotel, recently sold, has been declared a cultural icon by Vancouverites from Mayor Gregor Robertson on down. Across the street, Loblaws is building a new grocery store, and Bohème, a stylish new mixed-use project by Woodland Hastings Properties — part of the Millennium Group — will replace a former car dealership.

The name Bohème was chosen because the area is reminiscent of Paris's St. Germain district, home of the original bohemians, says Millennium director Shahram Malek. "We like the connotation of being tied into a different environment from what you typically see in Vancouver. We've actually been looking for many years to find a site big enough in the Commercial Drive area to design a large mixed-use development with commercial and residential."

Occupying a full block between McLean and Woodland Drive, Bohème will include 24,000 square feet of street-level commercial space with visitor and resident parking underground and three storeys of

condominium and rental suites above. The exterior, divided into two sections with contemporary glass and metal with an overhanging roof on the western side and more traditional white brick on the east, is designed to fit into the neighbourhood. “The development pattern along Hastings Street has been sort of a jigsaw, see-saw, up-and-down pattern of properties built at different times by different owners with different materials, and that’s what gives Hastings a lot of its life, especially as you go further west into the city,” explains Stuart Lyon of GBL Architects, which designed the project. “By breaking our site down into at least two components, we felt that we’ve kind of honoured that tradition.”

Interiors are thoroughly modern. Kitchens feature an integrated Blomberg fridge and dishwasher concealed behind flat-front wood-grain cabinetry. The Faber range hood slides in under the cabinets when not in use. Polished granite is used for the countertop and backsplash, extending up the wall to the underlit cabinets as well as forming a narrow shelf along the third side of U-shaped kitchens, a smart way to add extra surface space. The Fulgor stove top is gas, the oven and under-counter microwave are convection. The undermount stainless steel sink is a foot deep. All suites have room for a dining table, and many also have an eating bar. Floors are wide-plank laminate hardwood everywhere except the bathrooms.

Bathrooms are clean-lined and airy, with floors and walls covered in oversized marbled white tile. Light emanates from above and below the vanity mirror as well as beneath the wall-hung vanity.

Windows are generous in size and number, with views of the mountains to the north and downtown Vancouver to the west. The south side looks out on private and communal terrace gardens, as does the on-site fitness studio. Every suite has a balcony or patio, some larger than 300 square feet. The common room with kitchen facilities also opens onto a large terrace.

“Our intention is to create a community in addition to the current community,” says Sharam Malek of Millenium. The company has a history of introducing residential development into previously industrial or commercial neighbourhoods: the Olympic Village in southeast False Creek, One Madison Avenue in an industrial area of Burnaby, Villa Jardin near the Edmunds SkyTrain station. The bank balked at financing the seven-tower Villa Jardin, arguing that it was in the middle of nowhere and Millennium was the first one there, says Malek. “In that case we had a large enough area to create our own community with the formal gardens and everything else. One Madison Avenue, again this area was very industrial when we moved into it. We built three towers, but again because we focused on design and architecture and also transit, it worked. Generally, one thing we try to do here is really good quality as opposed to saying, well, the neighbourhood isn’t ready for the quality.”

Instead, Millennium offers attractive pricing, good quality and a self-sufficient community, Malek says. Bohème will have the amenities of Commercial Drive, a Loblaws grocery store, a daycare across the street, transit at the front door to downtown, SFU, UBC and SkyTrain, plus its own ground-floor stores and restaurants. As for the Waldorf, “we are confident that the parties involved will come up with an arrangement that is mutually beneficial,” Malek says diplomatically.

**Bohème**

**Project size:** 102 units, including 20 rental

**Residence size:** One- and two-bedrooms.

**Prices:** \$229,900-\$517,900

**Sales Centre:** 1588 East Hastings St., Vancouver

**Hours:** noon- 5 p.m., Saturday to Thursday

**Telephone:** 604-569-3388

**Email:** info Woodland Hastings Properties Ltd.

**Architect:** GBL Architects

**Interior Design:** Occupy Design

**Web:** [www.bohemeliving.com](http://www.bohemeliving.com)

**Financing:** Line of credit to cover 15 per cent down payment available from Vancity Credit Union for approved buyers.

**Warranty:** National Home Warranty

**Completion/Occupancy:** September 2014

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