



Legato

by LAURA WALKER

Named “Legato” – Italian for music notes that are tied together to create a smooth transition from one note to another – one of Victoria, B.C.’s newest buildings is an 18-storey condominium by Alpha Project Developments Ltd. that aims to be much more than just a residence, but a complete lifestyle experience.

With a shopping centre across the street, as well as retail space at grade, the building offers the inhabitants of its 88 units easy access to all required amenities, a multi-functional garden oasis in the middle of the city and unobstructed views from each suite.

“Our challenge and goal for this project is to create a building that belongs in, resonates with, and perhaps approaches the beauty of our natural surroundings,” explains Lynn Gordon-Findlay of de Hoog & Kierulf architects. “Colours and materials inside and out were selected to reflect and celebrate our natural West Coast landscapes, seascapes and skylines.”

The form of the building was driven by the goal to provide southern sun exposure and views towards the ocean and mountains for all suites. As such, the typical floor plan is quite narrow at the front, providing a tall elegant presentation at the street.

Moving back from the street, the building steps out to either side to provide south views to the west-oriented and east-oriented suites. The building then moves out to either side again toward the back so that even the north-oriented suites have views to the south.

“The steps in the building are joined together by curved balconies that inspired the name

of the building. ‘Legato’ in musical notation indicates that musical notes are played or sung smoothly and connected,” says Gordon-Findlay.

The building features an extensive use of glass, which was selected to exude simplicity, elegance and lightness, while a limestone veneer in two complementary colours was chosen for the cladding along the street frontage and for the vertical elements at the front of the building to emphasize the slenderness of the massing.

The exterior of the building is clad with a combination of limestone veneer and stucco on rainscreen systems, as well as Exterior Insulation Finish System (EIFS), while Low-E coated aluminum curtain wall has also been utilized as a thermally-efficient glazing system.

Meanwhile, glazed aluminum railings offer a clean and modern look and allow for uninterrupted site lines. “Subtle nods to the building’s name are represented in custom screens, and bike racks paying homage to the musical influence,” says Aimee North of Campbell Construction Ltd.

In an effort to extend the materiality of the exterior into the interior of the building, the inside of the building features natural materials, including stone, tile, wood, glass and exposed concrete.

“It’s a very simple, elegant building. The interior is quite modern with high-end finishes. The units are designed well with minimum waste,” says Bijan Neyestani, president of Alpha Project Developments Ltd.

Within the suites, German-made laminate flooring, porcelain tile and quartz countertops were selected to provide a sleek appearance and durability, while custom millwork with textured laminate doors imported from Italy are complemented by glass and aluminum upper cabinets and glazed ceramic mosaic backsplashes.

A two-storey open terrace on the second level provides residents with an extensive common green space that is both exposed to natural light and air, yet protected from weather.

“Having private access to a serene outdoor space, while still having the benefit of living in the heart of the city, makes this building ideal for buyers that are looking for the best of both worlds,” says North.

The terrace, which includes a water wall feature, outdoor kitchen, fire pit and zen garden, is designed for seclusion from the surrounding cityscape, providing spaces for a variety of social, physical and contemplative activities.

“Not only does the rain garden contribute to the overall stormwater management for the building, but it also provides a lush outdoor space for the owners’ use and enjoyment,” says North.

Feeding the water features, runoff flows into a depressed landscape where it is cleaned and used to water the gardens and excess is directed to storm drains.

“We’re always looking for how people will use the site and ecological values that we want to incorporate into a project,” says Scott Murdoch of Murdoch de Greeff Inc., who explains that under an environmental incentive, the feature makes the building eligible to receive a reduction on its annual municipal stormwater utility bill of as much as 40 percent.

The building’s wall and roof assemblies have been thermally improved to achieve the desired window to wall ratio, without compromising the overall thermal performance of the building, explains Kevin Pickwick of RJC Engineers. “High-performing, durable assemblies were selected to counter Victoria’s demanding coastal climate.”

Throughout the building, every effort was made to meet or exceed the latest energy efficient design codes, says Bal Klear of AES Engineering.

Common area lighting is 100 percent LED and suite lighting is 95 percent LED, while parkade lighting is controlled to turn off perimeter and dim drive aisle lighting when the space is unoccupied. Stairwell lighting is also designed to dim

LOCATION

960 Yates Street, Victoria, B.C.

OWNER/DEVELOPER

Alpha Project Developments Ltd.

ARCHITECT

de Hoog & Kierulf architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Campbell Construction Ltd.

STRUCTURAL/

BUILDING ENVELOPE CONSULTANT

RJC Engineers

MECHANICAL CONSULTANT

Avalon Mechanical Consultants Ltd.

ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

AES Engineering Ltd.

CIVIL CONSULTANT

Herold Engineering Ltd.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Murdoch de Greeff Inc.

TOTAL SIZE

90,000 square feet

TOTAL COST

\$27 million

when the space is unoccupied.

“We also made every effort to source and specify products that were locally manufactured, which allowed us to avoid the exchange rates and duties to keep the costs down. Where possible, we tried to use products with recycled content,” says Klear.

While every project comes with challenges, those experienced in the early stages of Legato’s construction were typical of Victoria, explains Leon Plett of RJC Engineers. “We had to address very high seismic loads – considerably higher than Vancouver – as well as very erratic soil conditions.”

Seismic issues were addressed using a ductile concrete core for the seismic system, which isolates the seismic system to the stair and elevator core, providing a direct path to the foundation.

“The variable rock profile on this site required blasting of rock for excavation at the west side of the site, while the east-side of the site required caissons and cantilevered grade beams adjacent a nearly vertical rock slope, so we had very difficult foundation conditions on this project,” says Plett, adding, “the construction challenges on this site were mostly below grade, but once out of the ground, the project was very straight forward structurally.”

Now nearing completion, Legato is among Victoria’s tallest buildings, but North suggests that the building still manages to blend in and complement its surrounding area.

“Though grand, it avoids coming across as imposing and manages to fit harmoniously with the surrounding neighbourhood,” says North.

Legato is already officially sold out, and is set to open to residents in April.

“The design and construction of this space has been one of the most challenging aspects to this project, but the results will be stunning,” says Gordon-Findlay. **A**