

Welcome to the neighborhood

BY NICOLE DECOSTA

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Located at 690 First Street – on the corner of 1st Street and D Avenue in downtown Lake Oswego – the new Heritage Townhomes sparkle, but also like they’ve been there forever.

Persimmon Development Group developed and built the five new townhomes, which feature two master suites, stainless steel appliances, slab granite countertops and courtyards.

Brian Lessler – president of Persimmon – visited the project recently, which confirmed his excitement for adding to the landscape in Lake Oswego, the city where he grew up.

Persimmon used green practices when building the units, which are each certified as Energy Star and Earth Advantage homes and designed for healthier indoor air.

Tour the units

The elegant townhomes combine nostalgic craftsmanship found in vintage 1920s homes with the convenience of today’s modern and casual lifestyle and start at \$599,900.

“I’ve always loved this particular style of architecture patterned after two brothers out of southern California, Greene and Greene,” Lessler said.

Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene were influential American architects, known for their Arts and Craft bungalow houses in the early 1900s. Their homes – with exposed beams, joints, pegs and complex wood-work – define that the entire structure is essential, inside and out.

“I knew we needed something with a low slung roof,” Lessler said. “We thought that turn of the century architecture would fit in with the community well.”

The downtown Lake Oswego location allows residents to stroll to the library, shops, restaurants and parks.

“(The area) has a small town feel, but the upscale amenities of a large city without the noise,” said Mary McSwain, director of marketing with Persimmon. “There is a reason the First Addition neighborhood was recently selected as one of the top ten neighborhoods in the U.S. by the American Planning Association. The area is extremely inviting and very, very walkable.”

The Heritage Townhomes feature double car garages in the back.

“This is incredibly convenient compared to most townhomes or condos available for sale, which have tandem garages or only room for one car,” McSwain said.

The exterior and landscaping are fully maintained for a carefree lifestyle.

Enter the unit through a small, gated courtyard. The home opens to a great room with a fireplace, Brazilian cherry floors and adjoining kitchen and powder bathroom. A staircase leads to the second story, containing two master suites, an open study area and laundry room.

The units are designed for empty nest couples, single and married business professionals, as well as retirees, Lessler said.

The master suite features 10 ft. tray ceilings and uplighting near the ceiling.

“We wanted to create something that added a little relief,” Lessler said. “It’s just a little bit of relief so it doesn’t feel too boxy and it gives you indirect lighting – a little atmosphere.”

Building a healthy environment

Lessler said window and door selections were chosen for their energy efficiency qualities. Sustainable practices are used with all Persimmon homes, he said.

“These (townhomes) were designed from the start without a typical crawlspace foundation. We have a fully isolated and conditioned crawlspace under these units. In your typical crawlspace you’ll have a dirt floor and a Visqueen cover,” Lessler said.

Visqueen, is a six mill thick, polyethylene plastic sheet, placed over the dirt to reduce the amount of moisture vaporizing out of the earth, into the crawl space, Lessler said. The concrete slab and foundation walls within the Heritage crawl space is insulated. Therefore, the space remains drier and warmer and is conditioned by the heating and cooling system, Lessler said.

“The furnace is underneath the house,” he said.

Why is being a green company important?

“We think it’s a better product in the end,” Lessler said.

Lessler said that fans are within each home.

“It comes on periodically throughout the day to avoid a stagnant air situation because the house is built so tight,” Lessler said.

Energy Star qualified green built homes can include a variety of energy-efficient features, such as effective insulation, high performance windows, tight construction and ducts, efficient heating and cooling equipment, and Energy Star qualified lighting and appliances.

Persimmon tries to recycle as much waste as possible; they separate out 100 percent of the wood waste and take the rest of the materials to a recycling site in Portland or Vancouver for further recycling whenever possible, according to the Web site.

Blending with the neighborhood

Prior to Persimmon, Lessler spent more than eight years developing business parks and office complexes for tenants such as Nike, Mentor Graphics and Sequent Computer Systems.

Brian has more than 35 years of experience in real estate development and construction management. In the last 14 years alone, Lessler and his team have constructed more than 80

custom and lifestyle homes at Persimmon, and custom homes in the neighborhoods throughout the Portland metro area, according to the company's Web site.

Now Persimmon is focused on new homes, condominiums and townhomes in the Portland and Vancouver area.

"Right now we're our own best client," Lessler said.

He said the Heritage Townhome project has been rewarding, not only because he's helped clients establish a new lifestyle in downtown Lake Oswego, but also because of the response from neighbors.

"They are absolutely beautiful, inside and out. They make a great addition to the neighborhood," said Taylor Mumm, who lives up the street with her mother, Candee Mumm. "I'd love to live in them."

Candee Mumm attended Lake Oswego High School and University of Oregon with Lessler. She said that when Lessler began the Heritage Townhomes he held neighborhood meetings to make sure the units would fit in with the neighborhood, and neighbors.

"He was very open to our suggestions and comments," Candee Mumm said. "I believe his good attention to neighborhood needs is part of what makes him a successful businessman."

Two townhomes are still available within the project.

"I really enjoy when people enjoy living in the products we build. That's exciting," Lessler said. "When you design something and put in a lot of energy and resources – and a lot of risk – and then you have someone come along and say, 'I love this. This is where I want to create my home with the people I love,' that's exciting for us."

For more information about the Heritage Townhomes, please visit the Web site at <http://www.heritagelakeoswego.com/> or call Jeanne Able with Windermere at 503-675-8264 or email jeanne@windermere.com.