Greenwich Time

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Down by the river Developer picks untraditional site for luxury condos, boardwalk, marina

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In Greenwich, areas that have traditionally been occupied by multifamily homes have in recent years become the site of luxury, multimillion-dollar condominiums. Champion Development is taking the trend a step further, turning what was once an industrial site for oil storage tanks on the Byram River into luxury waterfront condos with a marina and a boardwalk.

"The developers are blazing a trail, revitalizing this neighborhood," said Michael Stein of Norwalk's Stein & Troost Architecture, the designers of Greenwich Landing. "They have the vision to see how terrific this can and will be."

Gated Greenwich Landing at 88 S. Water St. will have 20 attached shingle-style units in one of three rows angled toward the water. Each three-bedroom condominium will have a walk-out patio, a three-car garage with two cars parking in tandem, and space to store boating gear or a small boat.

The homes directly facing the water will have a second terrace with an up-close waterview. Prices start at more than $2 million, said the listing agents, Joanne Mancuso and Kathryn Clauss of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Greenwich.

The marina, attended by a dockmaster, will accommodate 20 boats up to 50 feet in length and 8 feet of keel depth. A landscaped boardwalk, with an entertaining pavilion, will run alongside the riverfront. As a condition of town approval for the project, the boardwalk will be open to the public.

The approval process took five years, said James and John Wahba, principals at Champion. The Wahbas had envisioned 47 condos of one or two bedrooms but modified their plans.

The Wahbas grew up in Greenwich and are both graduates of Skidmore College. Champion Holding Co. was founded by their father, Mahmoud Wahba. The younger Wahbas started an Internet company while still in college.

The new community has typical coastal New England elements -- cupolas, dormers, small turrets and divided-light windows, among them.

Four seaside styles, named after waterfront or riverview towns, will be offered: the Amagansett, a Hamptons town near the tip of Long Island, N.Y.; the Essex, a village on the Connecticut River; the Stonington, on the eastern shoreline of Connecticut; and the Madaket, an area on Nantucket, Mass.

Interior spaces average 3,600 square feet in four layouts, but each home will have nine-foot ceilings, a living room with a gas fireplace, a dining area, and a choice of five kitchen styles with professional-quality appliances.

Kitchens -- named the Seaside, the Commodore, the Schooner, the Cottage and the British Colonial -- will have cabinets designed and hand-crafted by Christopher Peacock.

Stainless-steel appliances will include a Wolfe gas range and a SubZero refrigerator. All will have a garbage pullout and a tall pantry cabinet. Lighting will consist of under-cabinet lights, recessed lighting and decorative pendant fixtures.

"They have given us a blank creative workbook, saying 'make sure it has all the best,' " Howard said. "These are not cookie-cutter condos, but high-end small homes of quality. If you buy early, you will end up with a customized unit at a higher level than most people are used to seeing."

Floors will consist of three-quarter-inch hardwood. Stainless-steel sinks will have a garbage disposal, satin nickel faucet with pullout spray and matching soap dispenser.

Each condo has three bedrooms, two full baths and a laundry upstairs, a powder room and a family room off the kitchen on the main level, said Stein, whose firm has worked statewide on private homes, schools and health-care institutions.

Audio and video equipment upgrades are available to interested buyers. Options currently range from a 42-inch plasma HDTV to the ability to control all systems from a remote location via PC. Elevators from the garage level are also possible. A wine cellar is yet another option in Greenwich Landing units.

The Wahbas also have proposed tearing down a warehouse next door and building more condos.

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