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# WESTCOASTHOMES

SATURDAY, MAY 5 | 2012 | EDITOR BARBARA GUNN 604.605.2179 | HOMES@VANCOUVERSUN.COM

## NEW-HOME PROJECT PROFILE



High on a hill  
Parkside residents will have easy access to urban amenities, and enjoy the ‘green’ charms of New Westminster’s Victoria Hill H11-13



PHOTOS BY WAYNE LEIDENFROST/ PNG

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<b>House guests</b> Take a virtual tour of some stellar abodes, from a 1931 Spanish-style estate to a modern masterpiece. Go to <a href="http://vancouversun.com/homes">vancouversun.com/homes</a>	<b>Constructive thoughts</b> Many homeowners with outdated digs opt to spruce up, rather than move on. Peter Simpson knows exactly where they can brush up on their renovation smarts.	<b>Living lessons</b> Michael Geller is back from the Netherlands, and has some thoughts on what we might learn about urban planning and innovative housing.



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Onni interior designer Radana Trubka had the buyers' needs in mind as she planned out the space. She focused on creating a traditional design with 'little touches of contemporary.'

NEW-HOME PROJECT PROFILE

# At home in a green oasis

Onni highrise will be the last one to be built in New Westminster's Victoria Hill neighbourhood

**Parkside at Victoria Hill**  
**Project Address:** 271 Francis Way, New Westminster (off McBride Boulevard)  
**Project size:** 226 homes in 22-storey tower; 22 townhomes  
**Residence size:** 1 bed 635 – 810 sq. ft; 2 bed 870 – 985 sq. ft; 2 bed + den 970 – 1,150 sq. ft; 3 bed townhomes 1,650 – 2,000 sq. ft.  
**Prices:** 1 bed from \$249,000; 2 bed from \$350,000; 2 bed + den from \$376,900, townhomes from \$620,900  
**Developer:** Onni  
**Architect:** Martin Bruckner, IBI Group  
**Interior Design:** Radana Trubka, Onni  
**Sales centre address:** 295 Francis Way and Memorial Drive, New Westminster  
**Hours:** noon – 6 p.m., Sat. – Thurs.  
**Telephone:** 604-523-0733  
**Web:** www.onni.com/parkside  
**Occupancy:** Spring 2015  
**Sales begin:** mid-May

BY CLAUDIA KWAN

Most people driving along bustling McBride Boulevard in New Westminster likely have no idea of the gem of a neighbourhood nestled just metres away. However, anyone who has been living in the master-planned community of Victoria Hill since the early 2000s knows all about its charms, including the copious amount of green space, the walking paths, and the easy access to the rest of the city and the Lower Mainland.

Developer Onni controls most of the 65-acre site, and over the years has built seven projects there; vice-president of sales Nick Belmar says in some ways, the new Parkside development represents “saving the best for last.”

“This will be the last highrise in Victoria Hill, and it feels like an accomplishment,” he says. “Parkside is as far north and east on the site as you can get, up on a rise. That means it’s set back from McBride and you’ll have 360-degree views as of the seventh floor. You’ll be able to see the North Shore mountains, the Fraser River, or the Pattullo [Bridge], depending on what side of the building



The Parkside highrise on Victoria Hill will offer 360-degree views from the seventh floor up. The large windows used in the design will provide ample natural light.

you’re on.”

Belmar says Onni worked with the City of New Westminster on a shared vision for the neighbourhood. Approximately two-thirds of the site has been devoted to green space, creating an opportunity to connect into a regional system of greenways.

Residents can take a pedestrian walkway to get to Queens Park, or take a rambling walk on a nature trail to Glenbrook Ravine. It’s a little taste of wilderness in the middle of an urban environment.

Architect Martin Bruckner of IBI Group says having Parkside on a higher elevation in Victoria Hill was both an advantage and a challenge.

“It’s a very prominent site at the top of the hill, and we knew it would be a large building. We realized we needed to think about what it would look like from a distance, as well as up close.”

Some of the other highrises in the area feel a little more traditional. For Parkside, Bruckner

went with a more modern look. Brick at the base of the tower ties it in to its neighbours and the heritage character of some of the other buildings on site. However, above the third floor, the tower transitions into concrete, glass and metal. Bruckner also included a vertical facade element, which draws the eye upward, where the sleek metal beams form something akin to a crown.

The original plan for Parkside called for four buildings. They would have been lower in overall height, while covering a larger footprint. Bruckner says combining the homes into one tower allowed more flexibility in where to place it on the site, and ultimately made for a better use of space.

Bruckner wanted a little pizzazz to “announce” the entrance point to the building.

“The main entrance is a direct focus when you’re entering the neighbourhood from McBride, since your eye goes right to the front door. We were able

to preserve some existing tall trees, and frame the *Porte cochere*-style entryway.”

Parkside’s 22 three-bedroom townhomes wrap around the east side of the site, overlooking the pedestrian walkway to the ravine. They are arranged in a sharp V-shape, with extensive landscaping, an outdoor pool, and lounging area at the widest point. They, along with the 5,400 square feet of amenities – including guest suites – contribute to almost a resort-like feel for the project.

Inside, Onni interior designer Radana Trubka says she had the buyers’ needs in mind as she planned out the spaces.

“They’re very family-oriented, there are lots of first-time homebuyers and downsizers who have either already lived in the area or are moving a little closer to downtown from Surrey. I didn’t want to do anything super edgy – I focused on lots of the traditional, with little touches of the contemporary.”

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To add to the feeling of sophistication in the kitchen design, stainless steel appliances were incorporated, including a wall oven, a gas range and built in microwave, all making for a space suited to a gourmet chef. Stainless sink and faucet (below) complete the look.

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In the kitchen, Trubka opted for a wall oven (as opposed to a stand alone unit) to get that extra edge of sophistication. Stainless steel appliances, including a gas range, under-cabinet puck lighting, stone counter-tops, and soft close cabinetry have become the basic minimum that consumers demand in new condominiums. Heated floors are an extra luxury touch in the bathrooms.

She also says she wanted the space to feel homey, especially for those transitioning from single-family residences.

“Downsizers are often coming in with a lot of pieces that mean a lot to them, so it was important to leave enough room for ‘real’ furniture, not the condo-sized sofa and the condo-sized bed. People should feel like they can have their friends over for dinner and entertain in the space, instead of being jammed into a tiny apartment.”

The homes include strategic nooks and crannies to accommodate small display spaces, and extend into outdoor patios or balconies, allowing residents to take full advantage of indoor/outdoor living.

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