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Full speed ahead on condos

Young firm has ample slate of developments underway

By: Murray McNeill

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Karampaul Sandhu of Sandhu Developments Inc. in front of the 24-unit Sands on Leila apartment-style condo project under construction at 680 Mathias Ave.

It's only been in business for about 18 months, but a local condominium developer is wasting no time in making its presence felt.

Sandhu Developments Inc. has already completed one condo project in partnership with another local developer, has a second project underway and three more in the works.

The latter include a 44-unit, apartment-style condo complex on Sherbrook Street that will be the first new

condo development ever built in the West Broadway area.

"We do have a few projects in the pipeline," Sandhu owner Karampaul Sandhu said. And if he has his way, the company will be adding at least one more in the near future.

Sandhu has his eye on a vacant downtown property where he hopes to build a 40- to 50-unit condo or apartment complex. But first he has to acquire it -- something he hopes to do within the next few months so he can begin construction next summer.

"I'd really like to do some new developments (in the downtown)," he said. "There is a new sort of energy there. It's an exciting place to be... and I want to be one of the guys pushing it forward."

All but one of Sandhu Developments' current projects are located in the suburbs -- two in the Leila Avenue area of northwest Winnipeg and one in St. James.

The lone exception is the Sherbrook Centre development on Sherbrook. The city has already approved that project, with work to get underway later this year and completion expected next fall.

Sandhu is also a big fan of Sherbrook Street and the recent transformation that has been taking place there.

"Sherbrook (south of Broadway) has become really gentrified in the last three years," he said. "It's almost getting to be in the same league as what you're seeing in Osborne Village and on Corydon (Avenue)."

And the West Broadway Development Corp. is welcoming the new development with open arms.

Brian Grant, the corporation's housing development officer, said several older apartment blocks in the area have been converted to condos in recent years.

But this is the first new condo development to be built from scratch.

"I'm hoping this is going to take some of the pressure off for more apartments to be converted," Grant said.

He's also hoping it might be a catalyst for other condo or apartment developments in the area.

Sandhu said the one- and two-bedroom units will be priced at \$160,000 and \$180,000 respectively.

He expects them to appeal to first-time homebuyers, including people who work at the nearby Misericordia Health Centre.

The Sandu Development project that's already underway is the 24-unit Sands on Leila complex. It's being built on Mathias Avenue immediately north of Leila. Work got underway in April and is to be complete by the end of this year.

Sherbrook Centre and the Sands on Leila are both Sandhu Developments' own projects. The other two projects it's working on are being developed on behalf of other investors.

The second Leila-area project, called the Leila North Condos, is being developed on behalf of a group of four local investors. It's intended to be a two-phase development, with work on the first phase to get underway next spring. It's expected to take about a year to complete. The timing for Phase 2 will be determined by the speed at which the Phase 1 units are sold.

The St. James project, called the Sturgeon Meadows Condos, is also envisioned as a two-phase

development.

The investors there are Century 21 Carrie.com and Thunderbird Holdings, and work is expected to get underway next spring.

The project that's already complete is the 38-unit Templeton Pointe Condos at Templeton Avenue and McGregor Street. It was completed last December and was a joint venture with another local developer.

Although his company has only been in business for about 18 months, Sandhu has been working in the residential development field for about eight years. Between 2005 and 2010, he built about 50 condos and single-family homes in the city in partnership with Noble Homes.

While his company does greenfield developments, Sandhu said his preference is to do infill developments in established neighbourhoods. That's another reason why he's so keen to do a downtown project.

Know of any newsworthy or interesting trends or developments in the local office, retail, or industrial real estate sectors? Let real estate reporter Murray McNeill know at the email address below, or at 697-7254.

murray.mcneill@freepress.mb.ca

Busy on several fronts

Sandhu Developments Inc. condo projects:

Templeton Pointe Condominiums, a 38-unit, townhouse-style complex in partnership with another local developer. Two- and three-bedroom units range from 1,377 to 1,459 sq. ft. and include full basement and two-car garage. Prices started at \$229,000.

The Sands on Leila, a 24-unit, apartment-style complex at 680 Mathias Ave. Construction began in April and should be complete by the end of this year. Includes three 780-sq.-ft., one-bedroom units priced at \$225,000, and 21 915-sq.-ft., two-bedroom units at \$245,900. Fifteen units have been sold, including all of the one-bedroom ones.

Sherbrook Centre, a 44-unit, apartment-style complex at Sherbrook Street and Sara Avenue that will include one main-floor, 960-square-foot commercial unit. The residential condos will include one-bedroom units at 515 to 520 sq. ft. and priced at \$160,00, and 747-sq.-ft. two-bedroom units at \$180,000. Construction is to start later this year and be complete by the fall of next year.

Sturgeon Meadows Condominiums, a two-phase, apartment-style condo complex to be built at Sturgeon Road and Saskatchewan Avenue. First phase to include 71 one- and two-bedroom units ranging from 700 to 950 sq. ft. Prices to be determined. Construction to get underway next spring.

Leila North Condos, another two-phase development to be built on Leila Avenue. First phase to be 51 bungalow-style condos, ranging from 1,000 to 1,200 sq. ft., with full basement and double-attached garage. Price to be determined. Construction to start next spring. Second phase to be apartment-style condos.

-- source: Sandu Developments Inc.