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Vestri of Steffian Bradley designs Hastings Cos. \$50 million BackRiver Townhomes

August 13, 2008 - Construction Design & Engineering

Ron Vestri, AIA, a principal and studio leader of Steffian Bradley Architects is the primary designer for developer Thomas Hastings of The Hastings Companies' BackRiver Townhomes a 45-unit, \$50 million project.

The architects and Hastings knew that how the residences are situated would be key. Vestri, in consultation with Steffian Bradley Architects' board chairman Peter Steffian, FAIA, wanted as many owners as possible to have a view of the Back River or the marshlands that lead into the adjacent 500-acre Bare Cove Park.

In order to fit the 45 townhomes into the site, Vestri designed a series of nine 3-unit 'clustered' manor-style houses. The two- or three-bedroom townhomes are two or three stories depending on floor plan.

Vestri's team created six floor plans, each geared toward buyers at various stages of their lives. Some are designed specifically for empty-nesters. Half the units have master bedrooms on the first floor; the others have walkout basement levels with an entertainment / media room, exercise room or fourth bedroom on the lower level. Residences range from 2,200 to 3,800 s/f.

The project manager is Brad Soule and the site supervisor/construction manager is Harry McLellan. Among BackRiver's architectural and energy-saving amenities:

- * private patios, balconies and cupolas
- * Energy-saving appliances and 'Energy Star' compliant mechanical systems by a natural gas fired air system
- * Maintenance-free composite exterior trim and decking,
- * Exterior: stained white cedar shingles with low-maintenance composite trim; roof shingles: asphalt over waterproof membrane
- * Windows: vinyl clad with low E insulated glass; exterior front doors: insulated fiberglass
- * Common walls: two independent 2" x 4" wood framed stud walls with a one inch air space dividing each wall. A 2" thick soundproof shaft liner layer completely separates each home all the way to the roofline. A single layer of fire code sheetrock on each side of the living space, insulated on both sides with 3 ½" of fiberglass sound blanket
- * Exterior walls: insulated with R-value R-19 fiberglass insulation, wrapped with an air barrier; cathedral and flat ceilings against unheated space have 9" of fiberglass insulation
- * Fireplaces: 36" wide, pre-fabricated, self-contained, gas log firebox with ceramic tile surround and hearth
- * Interior trim: cased openings rimmed with 3 ½" finger-jointed casing. Baseboards are 7 ½" finger-jointed colonial casing
- * Water closets: elongated water savers

Hastings said he had 10 sales even before groundbreaking for Phase I. On Phase II, during the first quarter of 2008, he received three deposits in one 10-day period. 50% of the total project sold before the model opened.

BackRiver is located off Rte. 3A, near Hingham Sq., and the new MBTA Hingham commuter train station. Other nearby amenities include the South Shore and Black Rock Country Clubs, Hewitt's Cove Marina, and access to the Back River and the 500-acre Bare Cove Park.

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