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Castle Street Cottages wins NAHB's "Best in American Living" Award

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East Greenwich, RI The Castle Street Cottages on Rope Walk Hill, located at 15 Castle St., has been honored by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) with the 2019 Best in American Living Award (BALA) for community of the year, single-family under 100 units, and has also won an award for the suburban infill community of the year 2019.

The new development is a national example of a "pocket neighborhood," an increasingly popular design concept that creates an intimate yet luxurious community on a small plot of land. The Castle Street Cottages represents a new urbanistic design concept that rarely exists currently in the Northeast region.

Developer and builder East Greenwich Cove Builders LLC, along with architects Union Studios, George Bennett, and designer Debra Zarrella, created what is just the third recognized 'pocket neighborhood' in New England and the first in Rhode Island in the densely populated and historic 'Hill and Harbor' neighborhood of East Greenwich, steps from the town's historic waterfront and downtown districts.

"Receiving this prestigious award is confirmation that our vision for the Castle Street Cottages is valued throughout our industry, and I look forward to sharing this vision with the people of East Greenwich and all of Rhode Island," said Jerry Zarrella Jr., principal, East Greenwich Cove Builders. "With this project, we were able to capture the history and culture of East Greenwich and combine it with the social development aspect of the pocket neighborhood; a first of its kind for the area."

Popular in the Pacific Northwest, 'pocket neighborhoods' are built to be sensibly sized with a shared common area to promote a close-knit sense of community and neighborliness with an increased level of contact. The term 'pocket neighborhood' was coined by the visionary architect/author Ross Chapin, who said "when a small group of people are together, conversation is spontaneous. This fact of our human nature is what pocket neighborhoods are built around."

"[The Castle Street Cottages neighborhood] is a terrific location. Jerry has done a fantastic job and is well set up for the future," an impressed Chapin said. "This is a cherry."

East Greenwich Cove Builders principals Jerry Zarrella Jr. and Chris Santilli are second- and

third-generation builders who've sought to advance the industry locally, and beyond. "East Greenwich Cove Builders is a new age innovation that utilizes old school know how and work ethic to revolutionize the building industry," Santilli said.

Built on a 0.72 acre lot, previously home to dilapidated buildings, the community maximizes space, efficiency, and economy, beginning with an elevated and intimate shared garden courtyard. The landscape of the Castle Street Cottages creates an ambiance of timelessness and community. From hardscape materials to plant selections all of the elements create a welcoming mood of quiet elegance. Grand stone steps lead to the outdoor kitchen, perfectly-scaled gathering spaces, and oversized front porches, creating a space where neighborliness is not taken for granted. The East Greenwich community features nine highly efficient cottage-style and coastal-inspired dwelling units, four two-family townhouses, and one single-family home, offering multiple price points to ensure the community is affordable to many.

Each Castle Street Cottage offers large windows with an abundance of natural light, views of East Greenwich harbor and a one of a kind view of the village itself. Ranging in size from 1,000 to 2,000 s/f, each unit features top of the line building materials, luxury appliances, elevated ceilings, exterior porches, and countless other details one would expect in a luxury community. It also includes the latest in green building technologies, creating efficient units that will reach LEED certification upon completion. Each unit also has an option to purchase a boat slip at the local marina, located just 300 feet away. The community is within walking distance to Main St. shops and restaurants, Greenwich Bay Marina, waterfront dining, dog parks, playgrounds, and a lively nightlife scene.

"We truly wanted to bring something transformative to the area, and I believe we've done that," Zarrella said. "We hope this development brings back a sense of community, where you can feel safe in the comfort of knowing your neighbors, while providing repeatable lessons for building densely in historic neighborhoods"

Now in its 36th year, BALA recognizes outstanding achievement by builders and design professionals in all sectors of the residential housing industry including single-family production, custom, multifamily, affordable, remodeling, community and interiors. BALA is built on the principle that all great homes start with great design, no matter cost or size. Award winners will be formally announced during the annual NAHB International Builders' Show in Las Vegas, Nev. Additional Information about the BALA program can be found at bestinamericanliving.com. The 2019 Winners Portfolio, featuring design trends and project photographs, will be available online beginning January 23, 2020.

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