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WORK IN PROGRESS

Repton Place Condominiums a Natural Fit in Watertown

By Kay Metcalfe

REPTON PLACE, A NEW CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT, is currently under construction in the heart of Watertown. As much attention is being placed on the surroundings as on the buildings themselves. The complex, after all, derives its name from Sir Humphrey Repton, an 18th century English landscape architect whose philosophy concerning the natural beauty of green spaces and gardens has been a focal point in the design of the new 13-acre community.

The development will consist of five 4-story elevator buildings, underground and above-ground parking, and ample green space and outdoor seating areas and located on Pleasant Street. Developer Beacon Communities of Boston and its equity partner N.Y.-based Euristates, part of the Euris Group, are working together on the project with the Boston office of Dublin, Ireland-based financier Anglo Irish Bank Corp.; The Architectural Team of Chelsea; Boston-based landscape architects Halverson Design Partnership; and Boston-based marketing agent Otis & Ahearn. Boston-based Meredith & Grew/ONCOR helped arrange the financing and Duffy Design Group of Boston is the interior design firm.

Repton Place will house 385 condominium units: 22 studios, 161 one-bedroom units, 182 two-bedroom units and 20 three-bedroom units. Phase one of the project is under way and, when complete, will offer 179 units in three buildings. The 4-story buildings will offer views from elevation of about 85 feet, said Joseph Laurano, director of sales for Repton Place. "The top-floor units have great views of the treetops and Boston," he added.

"There will be [about] 60 units in each building with underground parking. There will be a variety of floor plans, ranging from studios to three-bedroom [units]. There are one-bedroom [units] with dens or home offices and two-bedrooms with dens," Laurano said. "Phase one should be done in December 2007 and the second phase will begin around completion of phase one. As the buildings are done and receiving certificates of occupancy, we can close them out and move people in."

The second phase of development will feature a fitness facility, conference rooms and a



Repton Place, a condominium development in Watertown, takes many of its cues from its namesake, English landscape architect Sir Humphrey Repton, who during the 1700s favored natural beauty rather than the formal English gardens then in vogue.

fully staffed on-site property office with 24-hour on-call concierge service for residents. The entire project is slated for completion sometime in 2009.

Repton Place will add a new flavor to Watertown with its unique design and accessibility to major roadways, city life and recreational opportunities, its developers say. "When we approached the site I was very excited. It's not often you get to develop an urban idea for a fairly unique location. It's got great access to Route 128, the [Massachusetts Turnpike], Boston, Newton and Belmont for people who are commuting; it's fast," said Pam Goodman, president of Beacon Communities.

"There is demand for this type of property layout [in Watertown]," said Laurano.

The development of Repton Place will add a new neighborhood feel to downtown Watertown, as well as improving its surroundings, Laurano said.

"Adding a neighborhood is huge," said Laurano. "Part of the permitting process was contributing to the infrastructure of the area; Pleasant Street is being redone, lights and sidewalks will be added, and the road will be widened, beginning in the next 10 to 14 months."

"We have been given the opportunity to recreate Pleasant Street," said Goodman. "Repton Place definitely addresses and unmet need

in the Watertown area; we will be able to offer a great product for an affordable price ... it's very uncommon for an urban development."

The site Repton Place now occupies was previously an industrial parcel. "We are creating something that's very unique to the area, unique and different; this area used to be a light-industrial site and was a cold-storage facility, mostly frozen French fries for McDonald's," said Laurano.

Beacon Communities and landscape architects Boston-based Halverson Design Partnership made concerted efforts to be environmentally conscious and keep Repton Place lush and green.

"First of all our inspiration came from our client, Beacon Communities," said Bob Brooks, senior associate for Halverson Design Partnership. "They had the vision to see the potential of the site; our direction came from them. We wanted it to be a special green space and ended up with a plan that makes a lot of sense."

"The enclave between three of the buildings is used to screen out parking and the street. It is very pedestrian-orientated with gardens and green space. There was also a lot of thought put into the on-grade patios for privacy."

"There are a lot of trees and shrubs. [At Repton Place] you will not be looking at the architecture, you will be looking at the green space," Brooks said. ■