

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.”

– Amelia Earhart



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Reconfigured Craftsman attractive inside and out **F12**



VANCOUVER SUN SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 2017

SECTION F



All about lifestyle

Amenities will abound at Opal, a block-long retirement community to rise in Cambie Village
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An artist's rendering depicts the lobby of the restorative wellness spa, which is among the many amenities at Opal located in Vancouver's Cambie Village.

OPAL ALLOWS SENIORS TO AGE-IN-PLACE

Luxury development has variety of accommodations and spans city block

KATHLEEN FREIMOND

Choose a special brew in the loose-leaf tea bar or practise yoga poses in a studio with a back-lit Himalayan rock salt wall. Indulge the senses in a rooftop herb garden, play games with the grandchildren in specially designed intergenerational spaces or host a family meal in a function room set up like a living room.

These will be just some of the options for residents at Opal, a planned development for seniors in Vancouver's Cambie Village.

The \$106-million Opal retirement community is the flagship for Element Lifestyle Retirement, the development management company founded by Don Ho, who pioneered the concept of "continuum of lifestyles" — the idea of aging in place — more than 20 years ago.

The luxury 130-unit development comprises three connected structures — one six-storey and two four-storey buildings — and spans a city block on the south side of King Edward Avenue between Yukon and Cambie streets.

The age-in-place philosophy that is the cornerstone of the development is reflected in the variety of accommodations in Opal.

Residents can live independently or access assisted living, and have priority access into the 24-hour registered nursing care in the complex-care units.

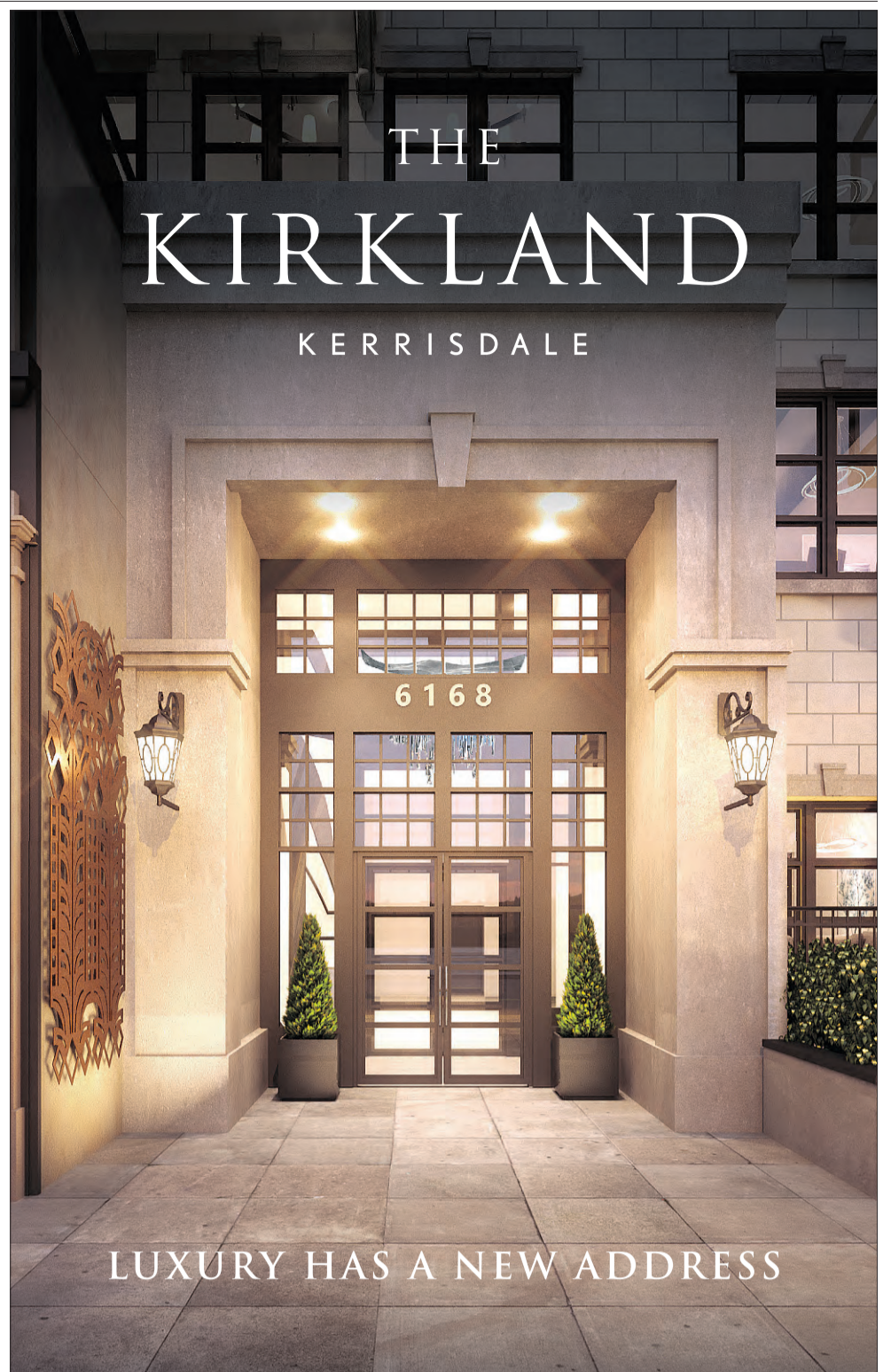
SEE OPAL ON F10

PROJECT DETAILS

Project: Opal
Project address: 438 West King Edward Ave.
Project area: Cambie Village, Vancouver
Developer: Opal Retirement Inc. and Opal Development Partnership
Architect: NORR Architects
Interior designer: Shrub Design Partnership
Bedrooms: one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom (no longer available)
Unit size: 612 – 2,324 sq. ft.
Price: From \$701,000
Sales centre: #130 City Square, 555 West 12th Ave., Vancouver
Sales centre hours: Monday to Friday, noon to 3 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday noon to 6 p.m.; Appointments by arrangement.
Sales centre phone: 604-871-9265
Website: opalbyelement.com



The rooftop patio at Opal is shown in an artist's rendering.



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Residents will be able to take their meals in the dining room or prepare their own in their contemporary kitchens.

Seniors' changing needs kept in mind

OPAL FROM F8

There are 44 condos for sale, 56 for rental, and 30 complex-care suites. Available condo options range from one-bedroom/one-bathroom homes (612 to 850 square feet), one-bedroom-and-den/one-bathroom homes (837 to 922 square feet) to two-bedroom/two-bathroom homes (906 to 1,547 square feet). Most homes have patios, ranging from 89 to 969 square feet.

Although the continuum of lifestyles was introduced by Don Ho more than two decades ago, it is not widely offered because it is challenging and expensive to operate, says his daughter Candy Ho, director and vice-president, marketing and corporate relations of Element, which is responsible for developing and operating Opal on a 20-year contract.

Opal residents will benefit from being able to access services as their health and wellness changes over time. "Residents will have priority for the complex-care facilities. This means families can look forward to peace of mind, knowing that support and care will be in place. No individual will have to look for another place and find nothing available. Nobody will have to endure the trauma of moving or be separated from their spouse because of care needs," Ho says.

While regulations require that at least one occupant in a unit must be 55-plus, Opal will be a welcoming environment for people of all ages, Ho says.

"With this model and approach, Opal is attracting a different profile. This is not a typical retirement home where the average age is 87. The average age is under 70. Many purchasers are in their early 60s, with spouses in their early 50s," she says.

"Our philosophy is to think about retirement and seniors' residences completely differently to accommodate the desire for connecting to youthful curiosity and energy, respect family values and provide flexibility and continuity through the continuum of lifestyles," Ho says.

"Our vision is to revolutionize the experience and perception of retirement and aging. Retirement is a mindset and a stage of life; it is the freedom to choose how to spend your time. Today's retirees and seniors want stability, familiarity, continuity and the invaluable aspect of relationships — family and friends," she says.

SEE OPAL ON F11



A show suite, above, below and below right, is on display at the Opal Discovery Centre at 555 West 12th Ave.



The movement studio will have a dramatic back-lit Himalayan rock salt wall.



An artist's rendering depicts the main lobby and dining area, which will be connected by an open space for various events.



An artist's rendering shows the hydrotherapy pool, where residents will be able to relax.



Market homes with one or two bedrooms are available at Opal.

OPAL FROM F10

Amenities and programming will support residents' lifestyle choices and have a definite sense of purpose, says Ho. Opal has 30,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor amenities. These include the movement studio with its dramatic rock salt wall for yoga, tai chi and QiGong and games like ping-pong; a gym; a restorative wellness spa, library lounge and games area; a business and IT centre; a chef's table and open display kitchen for culinary demonstrations and intergenerational cooking classes.

Adjoining private function rooms will be set up like living rooms — ideal for hosting meals where adults can relax at the dining room table while children play board games in the same space. Programming examples include visits to shows and performances and in-house seminars about subjects from health and nutrition to wine and travel.

While Opal offers a dining package for residents and incentives to encourage family and friends to visit, those who prefer to cook for themselves can take advantage of their condo's contemporary kitchen with quartz countertops. Major appliances include a Bosch four-burner cooktop, convection oven, fan and dishwasher, a microwave and a full-sized Fischer & Paykel refrigerator with freezer drawer. The rental suites have half-sized kitchen appliances, but all condos have Blomberg washers and dryers.

Switches and electrical outlets at heights specified for adaptable housing further support the aging-in-place philosophy.

The design to support this philosophy is perhaps best illustrated

in the bathrooms, which feature frameless glass shower doors and transition-free tiled showers.

This smooth access removes a potential tripping hazard and enables easy wheelchair access, if necessary.

Marble-look floor tiles are non-slip, and attention has also been paid to lighting and takes "aging eyes" into account, says Opal's project interior designer Diane Shrubbs of Shrubbs Design Partnership.

Shrubbs says in addition to ambient lighting, there is concealed lighting under the vanity, giving the room a sense of brightness. Back lighting on the mirror and medicine cabinets also makes it easier for applying make-up, or shaving.

The attention to lighting continues in the kitchens, where concealed lighting under the peninsula adds to the general illumination and gives one a sense of being in a space where there is lots of light, she says.

In addition to esthetics, Ho points out the concealed lighting in the bathrooms and kitchens is also a safety feature to prevent people who may get up at night from tripping.

To add to the external esthetics, suite numbers are lit with LEDs, enhancing the sense of arrival. "It's high impact and it's very functional and reflects the design philosophy for the whole development. Practical and elegant," says Shrubbs.

As construction gets underway over the next few weeks, no one will be watching its progress more keenly than Ho's parents, who will be among the first residents to move in when the development opens in early 2019.

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