



DEVELOPER PLANS DILWORTH-STYLE HOMES

3-6 Bedroom homes start at \$450,000; First to be ready by summer

Charlotte's Tuscan Development, perhaps best known for its trendy condo projects, has started site work for a single-family housing development on Sharon Amity Road.

Whitby Pond, about three blocks east of Cotswold Village Shops, will include 24 homes on five acres with a 0.75-acre pond. Houses will range from 3,011 to 3,566 square feet. Prices start at \$450,000.

Tuscan partner Ray "Rip" Farris III said interest in urban single-family housing is strong as buyers seek the privacy of a yard without a long commute from the suburbs.

"After we sold out the five homes in Trinity Commons (at Park Road and Princeton Avenue) three years ago, we had a list of 25 who asked us to let them know about future houses," he said.

Farris said Tuscan has a list of 62 prospective buyers and three sales reservations for Whitby Pond at Whitby Lane and Water Oak Road.

Residential real estate analyst Emma Littlejohn of The Littlejohn Group understands the attraction.

She said residents of the close-in community should have a relatively easy commute to most Charlotte destinations, including Ballantyne in south Charlotte and uptown.

Martin Kerr, Farris' partner in Tuscan and Structura - the general contracting firm that will build the houses - believes Whitby Pond will appeal to young families and empty nesters.

Cotswold Elementary and Randolph Middle schools are within walking distance. And, Kerr said, empty nesters will appreciate the community's downstairs master bedrooms and smaller lots.

Houses in Whitby Pond will have three to six bedrooms and 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 baths. Seven will have basements with two-car garages and space for a sauna, exercise room or wine cellar.

Exteriors will feature Craftsman-style architecture - similar to homes in Dilworth and other older neighborhoods - with siding and shakes, brick foundations and rocking-chair porches.

Houses will have 10-foot ceilings on the first floor and nine-foot ceilings on the second. Interior features include hardwood floors and designer kitchens with granite counter tops.

Farris expects to start construction of the first five houses in the \$12 million development by early January and complete them in early summer.

He said the developers drained the pond to facilitate construction, but they plan to restore it, add a waterfall and stock it with fish - bass, bream and maybe catfish - as an amenity for residents.

Allison Merriman, Tuscan's project manager, said a wetland area and a small creek will be preserved.

Merriman and Tuscan's Scott Kilby, landscape architects, will design landscaping for the project.

ColeJenest & Stone will handle site engineering.

One of the new community's streets will be named Night Heron Way. Tuscan is delighted to explain why.

During a wetlands study of the site, the developers learned of several nests of yellow-crested night herons.

After consulting with park and recreation officials, Tuscan delayed site work until late summer so fledglings of the threatened species would be out of their nests and gone.

Over the past six years, Tuscan's development focus has been on residential condos - Tivoli in First Ward's Garden District, Kensington Court in Plaza-Midwood, Hawthorne Court overlooking Independence Freeway and Scots Hill in the Ballantyne area of south Charlotte.

It recently announced two small condo projects - NoDa18 in the North Davidson Street arts district and Opt12 in Optimist Park near uptown.

Farris said the company also plans to remain active in the urban single-family market.

"We're going to take the same approach as we did at Whitby Pond," he said. "We will design each project individually for the site conditions."

Tuscan's Jessica Morris will handle Whitby Pond's sales from the company's South End sales office and selection gallery.
