

Burnaby, B.C. is home to an increasing number of well-designed high-rise residential towers. So, how to make new towers different and exciting for new residents and locals? That was the challenge faced by Ryan Bosa of Embassy Development Corporation when he decided four years ago to create a concrete and glass community in the rapidly-evolving Brentwood district.

Legacy consists of two 30-storey towers and concrete town homes (for a total of 332 living units) flanked by a spectacular plaza that will be a vibrant destination of shops, services and recreational facilities. The towers offer ample space and expansive glazing for residents, with one-bedroom suites starting at 811 square feet and two bedrooms with den at 1,368 square feet. The exterior appearance of the towers imparts an avant-garde ambience thanks to jutting columns of balconies, soaring roofs and a playful use of colour as cladding highlights.

Bosa applied his family's renowned commitment to livability to Legacy and went a step further in retaining architect Hossein Amanat, who has created some of the most prestigious modern buildings in his native Iran, as well as the world administrative centre of the Baha'i faith in Haifa, Israel. "We had worked together on a residential project in San Diego and I was enormously impressed with his talent," says Bosa. Because Legacy would be located in the farthest reaches of Brentwood with the intention of coaxing subsequent municipal development in its direction, Bosa stresses that, "We really needed something that would stand out, and Hossein was the man for the job."

Amanat's approach to design was unique for Embassy Development. Bosa explains, "We usually design buildings from the inside out, but Hossein handed us a concept that had been designed from the outside in, an approach that in lesser hands usually means breaking the bank and inadequate suite layouts." In Amanat's design, however, orientation, room dimensions and other interior factors were all ideal. "It was one of the cleanest, most beautiful designs I've ever seen," says Bosa.

Amanat's concept took advantage of something that is normally a headache for architects, namely, the presence of a rapid transit rail system situated beside the project site – in this case, the SkyTrain Millennium line. "We wanted Legacy to harmonize with the transit station rather than be in visual opposition to it," Amanat says. "The solution lay in the metal roof of the station. It was vaulted. So I continued this motif for the roofs of our townhouses and towers, and the result is there's no other tower in the Vancouver area even remotely like this one."

Coloured concrete was used throughout the site, and colour played a major role in enhancing the towers' visual appeal. "To me, Vancouver high-rises are too bland, too grey, so on each of our towers we decided to have large accents of maroon and beige climbing up the sides of the building in a playful and, hopefully, pleasing manner."

Amanat arranged all the necessary elements of Legacy so that street-fronting mixed-use commercial and townhouse buildings were situated on Holdom Avenue, live/work townhouses fronted Goring Street at a right angle, and the two towers lay in the interior of the site. Along the northern edge of the property adjacent to the SkyTrain station, Amanat created a buffer space



# Legacy

by Robin Brunet



PHOTOS: TERRY GUSCOTT/ATN VISUALS



**LOCATION**

5695 Lougheed Highway  
Burnaby, B.C.

**OWNER/DEVELOPER**

Embassy Development Corporation

**ARCHITECT**

Arc Design International Corporation

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR**

Embassy Development Corporation

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**

John Bryson & Associates

**MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL ENGINEER**

SRC Engineering Consultants Ltd.

**INTERIOR DESIGN**

Design One Interiors Ltd.

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT**

Perry & Associates

**TOTAL AREA**

482,903 square feet

**TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST**

Undisclosed

that included urban trail development, a community amenity building and, most notably, a public plaza. "Shops line the plaza to make it people-friendly and to enhance Legacy's live/work components," says Amanat. The plaza would eventually be highlighted by a sculpture of an old locomotive engine poking out of the ground – a visual reference to a train that was supposedly swallowed by swampy terrain in the vicinity generations ago.

As whimsical as the sculpture may be, Bosa wished on numerous occasions that the four-acre site did not have such problematic terrain. Not only did it make creating foundations a problem, it impacted Bosa and Amanat's original intention to build three levels of underground parking. "Embassy contracts out the construction duties, and initially we thought we could dig down one level, but we slowly became aware of the extent of the soil challenges during the design phase," says Bosa. "As the geotechnical data came in, we had to update our design numerous times, struggling to keep the parking under-

ground. Eventually it became apparent that soil conditions combined with hydrostatic pressure created a unique scenario that would not allow us to go underground with our parking."

The buildings comprising Legacy were supported by slightly under 1,000 piles, each of them driven 30 to 40 feet into glacial till. As for the parking, "the City of Burnaby doesn't typically allow above-grade parking, but its people were sympathetic to our predicament and the geotechnical limitations," says Bosa. Amanat designed a three-storey parking facility that buttresses against the right-angle confluence of townhouses on Holdom and Goring. The landscape architecture firm of Perry & Associates created a massive, lush garden on the roof of the structure. "Essentially, the parking is completely hidden," says Amanat.

With these problems solved, construction on site was relatively uneventful. "The crews got mucky, but beyond that construction was straightforward," says Bosa, crediting Embassy project manager Mark Oord for maintaining a pace and safety standards that kept Legacy on schedule.

Oord agrees that apart from the soil conditions, construction was uneventful – with one notable exception. "The vaulted roofs of the towers we initially didn't give much thought to, but they turned out to be a challenge because of their high lifts [over 20 feet], curves and significant cantilevers," he says. "Quite honestly, the entire structures for the towers are unique, and it took intensive shoring and re-shores to finish them properly. But in terms of visual appeal, the effort was well worth it."

The attention to detail is as prevalent inside the towers and townhouses, thanks to Design One Interiors Ltd. and a host of seasoned tradespeople. Buyers have a choice of various open floor plans and two- or three-level townhomes ranging in size up to 1,848 square feet. Designer touches include granite countertops, extra wide baseboards, electric fireplaces with granite surround and wood mantles, and porcelain tiling. A 6,000-square-foot recreation building includes an exercise room, spa, steam room, sauna and lounge. "The theme of Legacy is connectivity," says Bosa. "It's a place where you can live in comfort as well as work and shop, take your bike through the nearby trails or hop on the SkyTrain. It's a community in every sense of the word."

For Amanat, Legacy was an opportunity to apply his architectural skills to a unique residential project. "Thanks to Ryan and his colleagues, this was a very fulfilling assignment," he says. "The Bosas are a close-knit family, and they always made me feel like I was a member." ■