

ANAGRAM HOMES' PARLIAMENT POINTE RUNS ON CLEAN ENERGY



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BY ASHLEIGH MATTERN

“What we’re trying to do is build a smart design that has sustainable features and that’s attainable.”

— Reg Hamilton, Founding Partner Anagram HOMES

The world is about to see a huge shift in energy resources. Solar energy technology is getting cheaper, with home builders often future-proofing houses for later installation, and some builders starting their projects with solar power production in mind.

“There’s a growing number of Saskatchewan people that think there should be more clean energy in the mix, and especially solar,” said Reg Hamilton, founding partner of Anagram HOMES. “The planet’s changing; people’s attitudes are changing.”

Anagram HOMES’ Parliament Pointe condos are being built with a solar-first approach, and once completed, the homes will receive the majority of their energy from the sun.

“They’re not cookie cutter, but they’re also not leaving a big footprint on the environment,” said Hamilton. “That’s an important element to us; it equates to being smart.”

MiEnergy Saskatchewan, based in Saskatoon, is the alternative energy provider for the project. David Anderson, a renewable energy engineer with MiEnergy, says on top of being environmentally sound, the condo owners will be saving money from the first day they turn on the lights.

“If you can add solar into the whole plan for the building and have it as part of a new mortgage for a client, that financed monthly payment is the same or less than your power bills,” said Anderson. “Anagram HOMES is saving all of their customers money from day one, and their utilities are not a concern. Every year the power goes up by five to six per cent per year, but all these customers aren’t affected by it. They’ve locked in their price for 25 years.”

Southern Saskatchewan is one of the sunniest places in Canada, with Regina seeing 2,338 sunlight hours per year. Per unit, the solar panels will output 4,250 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. With an estimated annual consumption of 7,000 kWh per year, the solar power will offset all but 2,750 kWh per year, saving each unit over \$500.

Anderson says this is the first multi-family project of this scale in Saskatchewan that is all solar, and all designed around the clean energy system.

“It’s a game changer,” he said. “In addition to being a great financial option because they don’t have to pay the ever-increasing power bill.” ▶

Parliament Pointe features sharp angles, wood accents, and an overall modern, trendy feel.

“The floor plans are more progressive than what you would see in a typical development, especially in Harbour Landing,” said LEED-accredited project Architect Darren Polanski. “They look a lot different than what’s on the market just from an architectural perspective.”

Polanski says that while this was the first time he’s designed a project that included solar energy, applying it to the design was the easy part. More challenging was doubling the density of the site to 32 units to improve its sustainability.

“The density on the site is one of the sustainable building blocks,” said Polanski. “It’s all connected: The solar, the efficiency of the building, the envelope, the footprint, specifying energy-efficient appliances. It all ties in to the same idea.”

In addition to being environmentally friendly and beautifully designed, Parliament Pointe qualifies as an affordable housing project under Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) guidelines.

Through CMHC’s Affordable Housing Centre, the project qualified for their Seed Funding Program and for CMHC’s Proposal Development Funding (PDF) Program.

“CMHC’s Seed Funding Program provides the financial assistance to carry out the initial activities required to develop a proposal for a specified affordable housing project that will result in increasing the stock of affordable housing in Canada,” explained Liane Dagenais, CMHC’s Affordable Housing Consultant for Saskatchewan.

“PDF loans help with the up-front expenses incurred during the process of developing an affordable housing project proposal and enable housing proponents to carry out the activities required to bring their proposal to the point where they can apply for mortgage financing.”

Construction financing for the project is provided by Head Start on a Home, a Saskatchewan housing program that aims to help builders construct at least 1,500 entry-level homes by the end of 2016.

Phase 1 construction of Parliament Pointe began this fall, with completion scheduled for spring 2016. Hamilton says he anticipates the project will sell out, and that Anagram will immediately start working on the next one.

“What we’re trying to do is build a smart design that has sustainable features and that’s attainable,” said Hamilton.

To learn more about this innovative project, visit www.parliamentpointe.com.



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