

Binning Tower will stand 22 storeys high in UBC's Wesbrook Village

Rennie Marketing Systems is the organizer behind the new Wall Group of Companies project

BY MARY FRANCES HILL

Bob Rennie doesn't need to do or say much to convince visitors to Binning Tower's sales centre that Wesbrook Village is one of the best neighbourhoods in the city.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, the UBC-area village was humming.

Inside a Blenz coffee shop, young people sat at their open laptops, chatting in groups, while other students could be seen in quiet study in an adjoining graduate school meeting space.

Across the street, low-rise condos share a block with dental clinics, small pet-accessory stores and retail boutiques.

Wesbrook Village is a complete community, a pedestrian-focused centre a jog away from the main UBC campus to the north and a walk to University Hill secondary school to the south. Although it's still relatively new, it's dense, quiet and complete.

In terms of marketing Binning Tower, half the work has already been done.

"There's been a lot of pioneering out here," says Rennie, whose Rennie Marketing Systems is the organizer behind the new Wall Group of Companies project, now at the preview stage.

"The brand is established."

The locale is one of the strongest magnets to Binning Tower, particularly among parents, since the community stands squarely in the catchment area of both University

Hill elementary and secondary, two respected Vancouver schools

In fact, the schools are such a draw that the Wall Group of Companies has decided to adapt floor plans to fit in more family-friendly three-bedroom homes in the tower in response to early demand, says Yvonne Dawson, sales associate with Rennie and Associates Realty.

Three-bedroom homes in the tower, which has 205 suites and 11 townhomes, are perfect for families and downsizing couples who place a high value on the lifestyle and cultural opportunities in the area, such as UBC's Chan Centre and the Freddie Wood Theatre, Rennie says.

The Binning name also carries cultural cachet. B.C. Binning, the namesake of Binning Road and the Binning Tower, was an artist and teacher, first at the Vancouver School of Art, then at UBC. He enjoyed a wide influence among artists and architects across Canada for many years, as he taught about the intimate relationship between art, design and architecture.

Binning Tower will stand on Binning two blocks from the hub of Wesbrook Village and directly beside Pacific Spirit Park.

"And you can walk to coffee shops," Rennie says, referring to the amenities that define a walkable, comfortable community. "Give me a grocery store and coffee shops, and I'll give you a neighbourhood."

Plans from UBC Properties Trust, the area's governing body, place low-rises in the centre of Wesbrook Village alongside retail, commercial and educational facilities. Highrises will stand on the outside edge of the community facing Pacific Spirit Park's trails and greenery.

Binning Tower's spacious, covered balconies are likely to be a draw for downsizers accustomed to having enough outdoor space to dine or barbecue. They offer rich views for homeowners, says Rennie: residents on higher levels will look west onto Wesbrook Village in the immediate vicinity, and the ocean beyond. Suites facing east will

look either onto the treetops (at higher levels) or directly into the lush green forest of Pacific Spirit Park.

“You’d think everybody would want the water views, but no, we’re getting a lot of interest from people who want to look at this very calming forest,” Dawson says.

Indoors, BYU Design has crafted warm interiors that show off the potential for comfortable living inside and the arresting views of Pacific Spirit Park greenery, as illustrated on the show suite’s oversized windows.

Each suite includes a flex room, which can be adapted into a storage room or small bedroom.

The tower’s suites come equipped with Thermador and Liebherr appliances (Gaggenau appliances come in the penthouses and townhomes) integrated into the Armony Cucine wood-panel cabinetry. Lower cabinets hold organizers for garbage, recycling, cutlery and accessories. A unique hood fan extends over the entire kitchen island like a canopy, framing the cooking prep space with an elegant, tidy storage space.

“This is the best stainless steel hood fan you’ve ever seen,” Rennie says with a laugh. “We [Rennie staff, Wall Group and BYU Design] all decided on these details [in the kitchen]. People want function, so we say, ‘give it to them.’”

The master ensuite bathroom draws attention too, with marble surrounding the bathtub, on the vanity and on the wall surrounding the toilet, a contrast to the dark glass tiles lining the wall above the bathtub. The bathrooms’ luxurious design, a Wall Group trademark, is consistent in every suite, no matter the size or price point, Dawson says.

Aside from a private gym and yoga studio, homeowners can also apply for membership to the University Neighbourhood Association (UNA). Members get free access to all libraries, the Museum of Anthropology, Nitobe Memorial Garden, UBC Botanical Garden and special rates at all UBC athletic and recreational facilities.

The Wall Group and IBI Architects designed Binning Tower to adapt to UBC’s mandates for “building green,” which consider high standards in waste management and energy efficiency.

Project: Binning Tower

Project size: 216 homes (205 suites in 22-storey tower, and 11 townhomes)

Residence sizes: One — three bedrooms; 632 — 2,016 sq. ft

Prices: From \$529,900

Project address: 3355 Binning Road, Vancouver

Developer: Wall Group of Companies

Architect: IBI Group

Interior Design: BYU Design

Sales Centre: 5898 Gray Ave. Wesbrook, UBC

Sales Centre hours: noon — 5 p.m., Sat — Thurs

Sales centre phone: 604-646-1111

Website: www.binningtower.com

Occupancy: mid 2016