

Today's New Homes

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Buyers sing praises of Lake Park Gateway I

North Kenwood condo community rated high for price, design and features

Quality construction, unusual luxury design, attention to detail and exceptional prices have condominium buyers singing the praises of developer Mitchell Newman, principal of Stratagem Home Builders.

Newman is developing Lake Park Gateway II, a 23-unit luxury condominium development now under construction at 1223-1249 E. 46th St. in the North Kenwood/Oakland neighborhood on Chicago's Mid-South Side.

It took just four months of home shopping for 36-year-old lawyer Karen Van Ryck deGroot and her 40-year-old husband Jerry Grenon, who is also a lawyer, to settle on Lake Park Gateway II. Previously, they resided in Lake View neighborhood.

"We looked on the North Side and compared prices to North Kenwood on the South Side, and learned it's much more affordable down here," Van Ryck deGroot said. "Price is, of course, an important factor. But in addition to that I thought that Lake Park Gateway II had the best bang for the buck in terms of amenities."

Available two-bedroom and three-bedroom units with 1,380 to 1,500 square feet of space range in base price from \$249,900 to \$349,900, said Newman. Several units are ready for immediate delivery. The second phase will include a three-flat condo building and a four-flat condo building, Newman said.

Van Ryck deGroot and Grenon purchased a four-bedroom, three-bath duplex condominium with 2,600 square feet of living space. They have lived happily in their new home for a year.

"I thought the styles of the Lake Park Gateway II condos were unique compared to other residences we had been looking at," Van Ryck deGroot said. "It was much more creatively designed. The floor plan was different than anything I'd seen."

Van Ryck deGroot said she and her husband appreciated that the bedrooms were so efficiently placed in the floor plan.

"The layout of the four-bedroom was different than any four-bedroom I'd seen," she said.

"In most units with multiple bedrooms, the bedrooms were close together, side by side. At Lake Park Gateway II, the bedrooms are zoned for privacy ... two bedrooms are on one side of the floor plan and two more are laid out on the other side."

None of the bedrooms shares a common wall, she said, which they also appreciate.

"There's so much more privacy, of course, when walls are not shared. I like that about the place," said Van Ryck deGroot, whose mother lives with the couple part of the year.

The floor plan and design features were done by interior designer Kapan Shipman of Habitar Design.

Phase I of the development is nearing completion along a quiet section of 46th Street less than two blocks from Lake Michigan. Phase I features 16 units in two eight-unit brick-and-stone buildings.

"The condominiums at Lake Park Gateway II are both innovative in design and built with uncommon quality and energy efficiency," Newman said.

Other buyers seem to agree and have a litany of praises for both Lake Park Gateway II and Newman.



Attorney Karen Van Ryck deGroot enjoys living at Lake Park Gateway II in North Kenwood. DeGroot and her husband have lived in the mid-South Side development for a year.

"I wanted to be in a property that had an established builder, a developer that had a good reputation," said Erin I. Slone, another happy Lake Park Gateway II buyer.

"My real estate agent told me that Mitch Newman took very good care of his properties and really paid attention to the things that individuals would want to have in their place," she said. "When I came in, this was probably the last of about eight properties that I had seen, and I fell in love with it immediately. There are just small details that really made the place really homey."

Buyers Terri and Derris Kelly were floored by the level of quality for the price.

"You could see all the intricacies and perfection in the craftsmanship in this whole place," said Derris Kelly. "It just outweighed everything else by a ton."

"I was actually surprised to look at the price for this unit, looking at all the stuff that was in it. I'm thinking, 'OK,

this is a steal. Let's jump on it like now,'" said Terri Kelly.

The development features striking streetscapes with masonry facades and stone detailing, and facade relief through bays and arches. The presence of decorative iron fencing adds an elegant touch to the development.

"The exterior design of Lake Park Gateway II by architect Alex Polichuk of Atelier 7, captures the look and feel of North Kenwood's vintage, turn-of-the-century architecture," Newman said.

The innovative interior design is showcased in the professionally decorated model residence designed by Kapan Shipman of Habitar Design, an Old Town-based firm owned by the developer.

"The model's living-dining room showcases such unique details as custom-built cherry fireplace mantel faced with mosaic tile, built-in bookcases and display niches," Newman said.

The bright and spacious 18.75-foot-

wide living room also features a set of bay windows. The adjoining dining area measures 14.75 feet wide. The entire great room space — including the living room, dining area and kitchen — is more than 27 feet long.

Kitchens at Lake Park Gateway II feature custom cabinetry and quartz counter tops, such as Silestone. An island breakfast bar and dual-sink divide the kitchen work area from the dining area. The kitchen also features a pantry for extra storage.

A gallery-style hallway leads back from the kitchen past a bedroom (10-by-9½ feet), a guest closet, utility room, laundry center, a shower bath and the second bedroom (9-by-10.4 feet).

The spacious 13¼-by-14¼-foot master bedroom features a tray ceiling and a sliding glass door opens to a private terrace. The adjoining master bath features a separate tub and shower and double-bowl vanity. A walk-in closet completes the master suite.

Both baths have spa showers, earth-

tone porcelain, and stone and mosaic tile, and custom-built bath vanities with vessel bowls.

"Condominiums at Lake Park Gateway II feature high-quality and energy-efficient construction," Newman said. "We are concerned with creating energy-efficient condominiums with low heating and cooling bills."

Standard energy features include Pella Impervia windows fitted with low-emissivity argon-filled double-pane glass, cellulose fiber insulation in walls and between floors and additional insulation in selected block walls bringing the R-value to R-16.

Floors feature ¾-inch plywood subflooring, a layer of 5/8-inch sound board, a second 3/8-inch subfloor, followed by the standard ¾-inch hardwood flooring. To add additional sound insulation, the developer blows in 12 inches of cellulose fiber insulation in floor joist spaces between units.

Party walls between units feature double drywall plus a layer of "green glue," a viscous polymer sound proofing material in critical areas.

All of the residences feature stunning brick-and-limestone facades with 5-foot brick side wraps. The roof has a 10-year materials-and-labor warranty and the double-waterproofed exterior walls feature a seven-year warranty.

Other standard interior amenities include 9½-foot ceilings, camera front-door answering system, Colonial-styled baseboard and door and window trim, in-unit washer and dryer, solid two panel doors and individual heating and air-conditioning systems.

"One of the best standard features is the sound wiring," Newman said. "The living room has surround sound with wires running back to speakers in the master bedroom. Our buyers can lie in bed and change the music with their remote. That's quite nice in combination with the cove lighting."

He also noted that the feature is popular among young professional buyers.

"The South Side has seen a resurgence of new residential development over the last several years," said Jerome Wade, president of the Southside Builders Association. "A diverse mix of buyers is coming from the South Side, the North Side and even the suburbs because of the significant value offered."

"Improvements to nearby Lake Shore Drive and the Lake Michigan shoreline, including a beach planned at 39th Street, make North Kenwood Chicago's next destination neighborhood," Wade said.

Real estate appraiser Gail Lissner of Appraisal Research Counselors Ltd., said that there is greater value for home buyers on the South Side of Chicago than on the North Side.

"You certainly can get significantly more for your money on the South Side," Lissner said. "If you are shopping for a home on the North Side of Chicago, you're probably paying 50 percent more."

Newman noted that the East North Kenwood location of the development is another plus.

"Lake Michigan and the Metra commuter station and is one and a half blocks to the east. A Bally's fitness club and Harris Bank is a block to the south on 47th Street," he said.

In 2007, the Chicago Association of Realtors said the median price for a condo in Kenwood was \$279,000, while the median single-family home price was \$680,000.

For an appointment to tour the furnished model at Lake Park Gateway II, 1223-1249 E. 46th St., call Lauren Lowery of Finders Plus Real Estate at (312) 554-8840. Or call (312) 315-5453, or visit www.strataghomebuilders.com.