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UPTOWN LIVING CAN BE LOW-RISE

THIRD WARD'S 1ST ROW WILL OFFER ALTERNATIVE TO TOWER-CONDO HOMES

DOUG SMITH, Staff Writer

Charlotte's Citiline Development is convinced that a portion of the home buyers rushing to the urban core prefer something other than a condo tower.

So it's clearing a 1.5-acre site at First and Elliot streets for a four-story project designed to blend with resurgent Third Ward's residences, restored warehouses and green space.

Connectivity is the buzz word at 84-unit 1st Row.

It's across First from OakPark, a late 1990s townhome development, and convenient to Frazier Park, the Johnson & Wales University campus, Gateway Village and the West Morehead Street office corridor.

And if the county develops a park in Third Ward as anticipated, residents will be within easy walking distance of it, too.

Over the past 10 months, developers have created an uptown residential boom by announcing projects - mainly high-rises - totaling more than 1,500 units.

About 10,000 people live in the center city and urban planners believe that number could double by the end of the decade if housing demand remains strong.

Third Ward activist Ginny Woolard, whose family's business - Armature Winding Co. - is across Elliot from 1st Row, said the condo project conforms with the neighborhood's vision plan for the corner.

She believes it has the potential to "pull together" the area between West Morehead and CedarHill and add to the diversity of the neighborhood, where residents range from young professionals to empty nesters.

Third Ward stretches roughly from Irwin Avenue Open Elementary School south to Morehead and from Interstate 77 east to South Tryon Street.

Citiline's Tim Crawford said architect Narmour Wright Associates designed the project with mostly two-bedroom flats (777 to 1,076 square feet), six townhomes (1,175 square feet) and three live-work units (1,745 square feet).

The three smallest flats - 511 square feet - will sell from the \$120,000s; two-bedroom flats from the \$150,000s to \$230,000s; townhomes from the \$250,000s, and live-work units from the \$360,000s.

The building will have a warehouse-style facade and include a private, landscaped interior courtyard.

Each resident will have one deeded parking space in a secure garage under the structure, which will be served by two elevators.

Among other features, Crawford said, 1st Row will have balconies, wood flooring in the main areas, tile flooring in bathrooms and designer lighting fixtures suspended over bar tops.

He said Citiline plans to start demolishing an old industrial building on the site in June. The project's first units should be completed by July 2006, he said.

Citiline is negotiating with general contractors to construct the building, Crawford said.

Scot Williams and Kevin Thompson of Helen Adams Realty are handling sales. They plan to kick off sales today with an 11 a.m.-2 p.m. open house at First and Third streets, diagonally across from the Carolina Panthers' practice field.

Doug Smith's Notebook

The Greater Charlotte Hospitality & Tourism Alliance (HTA) and the Charlotte Chamber will co-sponsor a business-to-business trade show and networking event March 15.

The 2005 Business Showcase is scheduled for 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the Charlotte Merchandise Mart on East Boulevard.

More than 150 businesses are participating. The show, open to members of the HTA and the Charlotte Chamber, typically attracts about 1,000 members.

It includes a reception and prize giveaways such as cruises to the Bahamas. For information, call the HTA, (704) 331-0079.

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1. RISDEN MCELROY RENDERING. Demolition of an old industrial building to make way for 1st Row condos will start in June. The first units are to be ready in 2006.; 2. RISDEN MCELROY RENDERING. A condo project called 1st Row planned in Third Ward will have a warehouse-style facade and a landscaped interior courtyard.