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ROUND AS THE PEARL

Beaverton's oft-delayed condo project is praised by residents



Photos by OLIVIA BUCKS/THE OREGONIAN

Friends (from left) Chelsea Gobel, Denise Homolka and Mary Sue Fordham order lunch from Nathaniel Jenkins at Mingo. After years of problems, the Round at Beaverton Central is expected to add three more buildings for offices and retailers, and two parking garages over the next three years.

By MICHELLE MANDEL
THE OREGONIAN

BEAVERTON —

Patty Crinklaw sits in her third-floor living room and watches — through floor-to-ceiling windows — MAX light rail trains pull in and out of the Round at Beaverton Central, the suburban condominium equivalent of Portland's upscale Pearl District.

Opening her balcony door, Crinklaw smells Thai food from Typhoon two floors down. The last Tuesday night of summer months, she sits on her balcony and listens to live bands in the fountain plaza below. Saturdays, she walks to nearby Beaverton Farmers Market. And she often strolls the few blocks to the Cedar Hills Crossing shopping center.

For 60-ish Crinklaw and her husband, Wayne, who raised their children on rural Bald Peak south of Hillsboro, life at the Round delights them daily. They know some residents might be cranky because the development that includes office and retail space has been besieged by building delays. Of eight buildings planned for the site, only three have been



Patty Crinklaw sits in her condominium at the Round at Beaverton Central. Crinklaw and her husband, Wayne, say they enjoy the lifestyle offered by the on-again off-again development's mix of apartments, businesses and restaurants.

completed.

The original 2001 agreement with Dorn-Platz Properties of Glendale, Calif., called for the \$120 million project at Southwest Hall Boulevard to be

completed by the end of this year.

Now, after legal pressure from Beaverton, the developer has agreed to build two parking garages and three mixed-used office and retail buildings by spring 2008.

But the Round that appears to be back on track is a fraction of what was first proposed. Since construction launched in 1997, the number of homes planned has been sliced from 149 to the current 65. The move leaves the mixed-use development with a mix heavier toward office and retail uses, rather than the urban housing oasis originally pitched.

Even so, those who have bought into the Round consider the delays as temporary bumps in the project's Pearl-like future, as small inconveniences for the development's ultimate payoff. In 35 years, it's been predicted that Beaverton could become Oregon's second-largest city, with a population as large as 250,000.

Buyers with vision, they think, will eventually reap large financial rewards.

"We didn't look at it as a risk," says Patty Crinklaw, standing on her bamboo floor. "We didn't

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Round:

Just like Pearl, minus the noise and the crowds

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want a town home, like those at Orenco Station. And we didn't want to live in the Pearl. It's so hard to find parking.

"We love it here," she says. "We take the MAX into Portland. We eat at the restaurants downstairs. We enjoy people-watching. It's a wonderful lifestyle."

Corey Folske thinks likewise. The 28-year-old, who used to pay \$1,200 a month to rent a 700-square-foot condominium in the Pearl, now owns a one-bedroom, 800-square-foot spread at the Round.

Folske, a downtown Portland commodity broker, says he grew up in North Dakota, and prefers the Round's relative quiet to the Pearl's frenetic pace.

"The Round's like the Pearl, but without the crowds and masses of people," he says. "I got sick of living with so many people jammed into such a small area."

"At the Round, it's calm city life."

That's always been the Round's intention, says Cherie Henry, the development's project manager. Much, she admits, has gone awry.

The original developer went bankrupt, stalling construction for two years. Sales have been slow, if not stagnant, since Dorn-Platz took over in 2001. They only recently picked up.

Development may have dragged, Henry says, but residents, by and large, have been sheltered from problems.

"I think the vision of what they thought this development was going to be may not have happened as quickly," Henry says. "But it's certainly happening now."

Of 65 condominiums built, 38 have sold and seven are in escrow. Thirteen condominiums have been leased, leaving 10 still on the market.



OLIVIA BUCKS/THE OREGONIAN

The Crinklaw's condominium in the Round at Beaverton Central offers a view of the courtyard and the MAX station. Summer concerts and restaurants draw people to the development along Southwest Hall Boulevard.

Condominiums, ranging in size from 750 square feet to 2,000 square feet, sell for \$170,000 to \$350,000. With 27 floor plans, few look the same.

Henry says with this summer's sizzling real estate market, remaining units could sell fast.

"As tough as all of this may have been the last couple of years, I expect in the next couple of years for this place to become totally hot," Henry says. "It's always difficult breaking new ground. When the Pearl District started, it was not an easy road. It took a few years for the Pearl to catch on."

Step into an occupied condominium at the Round, and everything appears designer done.

Patty Crinklaw raves about the developer's willingness to make design alterations after she and her husband purchased their one-bedroom, 1,200-square-foot unit in August 2003.

"I was here almost every day working with the developer," says Crinklaw, who upgraded the kitchen's standard stainless steel appliances to include a Bosch dishwasher, a Sub-Zero refrigerator and a wine cooler.

"We wanted a balcony, and they added one," she says. "We wanted a different bathroom ... and they built it."

Crinklaw says she has heard rumblings from other residents about construction delays, especially for the parking structures. Residents now have one assigned outdoor parking spot, and must hunt elsewhere to park a second car.

"It's a little frustrating at times, having two vehicles," says Folske, who moved into his second-floor unit almost two months ago.

Then again, Folske says, he rides MAX a lot more than before, especially to downtown Portland events.

His condominium, Folske says, more than makes up for the parking inconvenience. Before buying, he checked out units of similar size in the Pearl, and knows he would have paid \$50,000 to \$70,000 more for the same thing.

He's eager for the Round's retail stores to fill; he's hoping for a boutique clothing shop.

In the meantime, Folske, like the Crinklaws, can often be found downstairs on any day of the week. Ordering from Typhoon, Mingo or Mio Sushi. Visiting friends at outdoor tables or sunbathing in front of the gurgling fountain.

"I think the Round's caught on," Crinklaw says. "I really do."

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