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growth

Sitting pretty in Fairway Bay

Relaxing outside the cafe at Hobbs Wharf, looking at the big blue sky, the yachts at anchor and sparkle of sun on the water, you appreciate the wonder of Gulf Harbour.

Michael Webb-Speight is the development consultant to Top Harbour Limited, developer of the stretch of land between the marina and Gulf Harbour Country Club.

Michael says it's the ex-pats who sum it up best. "They look at all this and ask the obvious question, 'Why would you want to live anywhere else in Auckland?'"

Michael's grand project is Fairway Bay, first stage of a high quality 31 hectare housing development designed to face both the marina and the golf course. This is magnificent land for building, nicely elevated, well drained and mostly north-facing with stunning views. It encompasses the ridge, headland, waterfront and harbour positions.

The promotion of Fairway Bay has been carefully planned, with the establishment of a popular Sunday market, a seven-day cafe, jetty and pontoons, along with numerous community events preceding the first release of land.

Shades of 'Field of Dreams' and 'if you build it they will come' perhaps, but it's working – the Sunday market is averaging 900 visitors per week, and 3500 turned up for a recent Halloween event!

"It's all about building a community," Michael says. "Fairway Bay owners will have a stake in communal facilities such as a club pavilion, 18-metre swimming pool, and tennis court. They'll have a say in the management

of common areas and the general integrity of the development."

Top Harbour has also done its homework in terms of infrastructure. High on the list has been the petitioning of city authorities and ferry operators about increasing the ferry sailings to the Auckland CBD, with the aim of making it as commutable as Beachlands' Pine Harbour.

Four building companies were invited to build showhomes at Fairway Bay. All four companies – GJ Gardner, Jennian, Landmark and Sentinel Homes – have taken up the option, as well as the purchase of four lots each.

The Mayor poured the first slab for the GJ Gardner showhome, and even at this early stage 18 of the first 36 lots have been sold.

Each stage has been planned with a certain style of housing in mind, in respect to the land contours, space and the demands of the market.

Property sizes range from townhouse lots to 3500 square metres for the headland sections with harbour and gulf views.

Michael says interest is widespread: from North Shore families eyeing the less-pressured lifestyle and the decile 10 schools; ex-pats returning to what they see as simply a beautiful place; and couples wanting to put up the 'gone fishing' sign.

"We're building now," Michael says. Behind that statement is the suggestion that perhaps what is being built here is a great new community.

Clockwise from top left. Building a community: The cafe by the marina epitomises the family appeal of Fairway Bay. **Fairway Bay:** Occupies a superb site between the Country Club and the harbour. **Kensington Park:** Landscaping and planting creates a well integrated but relaxed, resort feeling. **Clear vision:** Everything about this carefully planned development breathes quality.



Kensington Park: Developing a community

The Kensington Park neighbourhood in Orewa is a housing development enjoying steady growth, finding favour with homeowners who are increasingly being attracted to the quality homes, landscaped reserves, leisure facilities and the vibrant Kensington Park community.

Unlike a traditional subdivision, Kensington Park is developing a great community as much as constructing houses, with a clear vision for success. While a significant attraction is the freehold title structure, buyers are as much attracted to the easy-care lifestyle and friendly neighbourhood.

A safe, caring neighbourhood is important, so the design concepts ensures safety factors are enhanced. For example balconies are elevated, enabling residents to look down onto streets and footpaths; streets are narrow to encourage slow vehicle movement; homes overlook parks/reserves and neighbours are encouraged to get to know one another.

Bylaws and design controls have also been adopted to enhance and preserve the quality of the living environment.

The homes are low-maintenance but quality-driven and designed for a lifestyle that enables home owners to enjoy the benefits of the extensive landscape plan. The average age of residents is around 57 with a mix ranging from young families to active retirees.

With facilities available to owners, including a gymnasium, heated pool, sauna and vegetable garden allotments, and with streets and reserves maintained to the highest of standards, residents could be forgiven for thinking they are living in a resort.

Instead, they are home owners in one of New Zealand's most liveable and award winning developments offering unbeatable location, facilities and lifestyle.

This popular neighbourhood has garnered international recognition, winning International Property Awards for Best Architecture, Best Development and Best Marketing, as well as an award for best NZ Urban Land Development with the NZ Property Council.

In 2007 the first residents moved in to Kensington Park which is now home to almost 400 people of varying ages. The 16 hectares development continues to grow with new homes released upon market demand.

Presently there are 69 homes under construction and it is expected the site will take a further five years to complete.

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