



Too much there meant Lesley Rommel can't capture with one click any of the Thunderbird Creek views. "Trying to capture the splendor of an entire view in just one photograph can be a challenge for any camera."

## Thunderbird Creek awaits inaugural families

**SQUAMISH** | Located at top of property, first homes offer views only loggers would have once known

### NEW HOMES

## PROJECT PROFILE

### Thunderbird Creek

**Location:** Garibaldi Highlands, Squamish  
**Sales centre locations:** West Vancouver, 1333 Marine Drive; Squamish, Sutton West Coast Realty office, 201 - 40147 Glenalder Place

**Telephone:** West Van, 604-913-1842; Squamish, 1/604-898-8966; Toll free, 1/866-598-2473

**Web:** thunderbirdliving.com

**Hours:** West Van, Mon - Fri, by appointment, Sat - Sun, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.; Squamish, Mon - Fri, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sat - Sun, noon - 4 p.m.

**Project size:** Currently, 82 single-family detached building lots; eventually, up to 700 residences, single-family and multi-family

**Lot sizes:** About 7,500 sq. ft. - 10,000 sq. ft.

**Prices:** \$275,000 - \$297,500

**Developer:** Townline Group of Companies and Holborn Group of Companies

Thunderbird Creek was my first window on the new-home opportunity in Squamish, a "view" I shared with *Vancouver Sun* readers last summer ("Big building lots exemplify Squamish's fun 'n' Games edge," Aug. 20).

Then, Thunderbird Creek was a testimonial to the ability of B.C. loggers and blasters and road-builders to prepare with dispatch a mountainside for exploitation.

Today, construction of the first homes is nearing completion. The builder of those homes, Chris Rommel, held his first open house last Sunday.

Lynn Harrison, Townline's director of sales and marketing, expects the inaugural Thunderbird Creek families will move in before summer is out.

"We have already turned over almost 50 lots to purchasers to start building homes," she reports. "Within weeks, we expect another 23 buyers will have the ability to begin building on their lots."

The first homes are the work of a veteran builder, Rommel Homes. They are "spec homes" built by Rommel on lots he purchased from Townline.

"Traditionally Rommel had done a lot of work on the North Shore but seeing the huge growth potential of Squamish, moved to Squamish and is now focusing on work in the Sea-to-Sky corridor," Harrison reports.

Nothing gets erected on a Thunderbird Creek lot without a review to ensure the the architecture of the home and the construction standards will meet design guidelines that are part of the agreement of sale and purchase.

The guidelines, although common in North American single-family-detached developments, are a novelty, or near novelty, in Squamish. Acceptance by new-home shoppers and Thunderbird Creek buyers has been "positive," Harrison says.

"Thunderbird purchasers have been very excited about the guidelines, as a means to protect their investment. They understand the guidelines are meant to be a framework that should ensure a strong community."

The guidelines require builders and owners to build to three styles and, further, to build within 18 months of buying a lot. The "build by" requirement "has been well received by buyers . . . who see it as further commitment to the community," Harrison says.

"One story that really expresses what we set out to do with the guidelines is the experience of one buyer who, after



Townline's Lynn Harrison expects the first Thunderbird Creek families will move into their homes before summer is out.

## The bottom line on the lots: 'One-half North Shore prices'

From K6

looking at the guidelines, was inspired by the three styles of homes illustrated," she reports.

"The guidelines took him outside of the home he originally conceived; he saw them as an inspiration-point to step up the design of his home."

If residency in big-lot homes built to a high standard that mirror a higher-ground location above the Squamish River Valley and below the mountains the river has breached on its way to Howe Sound, weren't enough of a lure, relative affordability is another.

"Builder lots in North Vancouver are at least double the price and in West Vancouver triple," Harrison reports. "Lots in Coquitlam are almost twice as much as Thunderbird Creek."

One of the pleasant discoveries of my visit last summer was the enthusiastic commitment from Townline managers to minimizing the project's consequences for the mountainside.

Installation of the first stormwater-management system, mostly drawings when I visited last summer, is one of this visit's "proofs" of Townline's commit-

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**-CHRIS COLBECK,**

*Qualex-Landmark, on sustainable development*

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ment. This system has two purposes, Townline's Kyle Shury comments. It demonstrates respect for the setting and offers Townline "the ability to mimic pre-development conditions in hydration."

Reduced road widths that reduce the presence of impenetrable concrete on the mountainside and street lights that reduce light reflection are "other features that minimize our environmental footprint," Shury says.

"There are several pillars to sustainable development. As a community, we pride ourselves on being able to offer a variety of housing types of different sizes and product styles.

"We embrace the principles of 'smart growth'; we see Thunderbird Creek as a place where homeowners can age in

place. We are proud that we will be able to offer the opportunity of appropriate housing for each stage of one's life.

We are committed to preserving the outdoor recreation and nature that Squamish is celebrated for. We've allocated a vast amount of open space throughout the Thunderbird Creek community, leaving significant amounts of greenery. We're working with nature and the elements to keep Squamish as it is."

Down below, "principles of sustainability," in the words of a city hall publication, will guide the waterfront transformation and an associated downtown rejuvenation. The Fraser Basin Council and a University of B.C. program are helping city hall, and developers, match principles to practices.

For Mayor Ian Sutherland, sustainable development downtown and on the waterfront would reduce the reliance of Squamish residents on their vehicles.

"We're going to have a very dense, vibrant downtown area where people can walk."

Additionally, city hall is actively supporting the opening of big-box retailers like Wal-Mart along Highway 99. "Any Saturday, I could go to North Vancouver and hold a townhall [meeting] in North Vancouver," the mayor comments of his enthusiasm for warehouse retailing in his community. "It's amazing."

Chris Colbeck of Qualex-Landmark, which will manage the development of the waterfront, says sustainable development has three components.

"You can look at it in the 'green' sense. You can look at it in the economic sense. And you can look at it in the social sense. Those are the three key components, and they are our triple bottom-line. Certainly, that's the message we got from the public.

"Sustainability is achieved by way of economics, by way of the environment and by way of community-slash-social.

"Economically we want to make sure this project is feasible, for the sake of the public and for the sake of ourselves, the developer. . . .

"But we also want it to contribute to the community. . . . That means revitalization, jobs, job-creation, bringing new industry to Squamish. We're trying to attract knowledge-based industry to Squamish. . . .

" . . . for Squamish to succeed there has to be job-creation. And that's more than the jobs we will create by building the development. It's long-term job growth. And for us to attract year-round residents there has to be jobs for them"

- Mike Sasges

'Mountain' architecture comes down the valley, and the highway, L7