



Courtesy, Statesman Corp.

Statesman Corp. is to use a new steel- and concrete-based construction method in its latest project, the WedgeWoods of Discovery Ridge in New Discovery.

# Looking to the future

MARTY HOPE  
CALGARY HERALD

**A** Calgary condominium builder plans to use non-combustible materials rather than wood in its latest project.

"We still like wood — it's a good product — but we won't be using it on buildings more than three storeys high," says Garth Mann, president and founder of Statesman Corp.

The company plans to use a construction method by Mega Building Systems in its latest project, the Wedge-

Woods of Discovery Ridge in New Discovery.

Using steel panelized studs and conventional-weight concrete that is poured in place, the patented technology was developed in Vancouver as an alternative to wood. Walls are built with a composite material that is highly resistant to wind shear.

A key element to the system is the wall isolation beam — formed when concrete is poured over steel pan decking directly above load-bearing steel-framed walls, eliminating the space between the wall and the floor.

The result is either a structural or

non-structural beam depending on the wall construction, which acts to reduce vibration, provide sound insulation and reduce the risk of fire.

Mann says the system was being considered before two out of the four wood-frame buildings in Statesman's Waterford condo complex were destroyed by a blaze last summer in the inner-city community of Erlton.

The multi-million-dollar fire that left about 300 people without homes was allegedly caused by a blowtorch used to



Garth Mann

meld membranes to the roof.

A separate fire at a 125-unit project operated by Summa Care Corp. is also believed to have been started by a blowtorch during construction. The blaze caused millions of dollars in damage to the Harbours of Newport Care Centre.

Statesman was approached by Mega Building Systems a couple of years ago,

says Mann.

SEE LOOKING, PAGE C58

## IN SHORT

**BUILDER/DEVELOPER:** Statesman Corp.

**PROJECT:** The WedgeWoods of Discovery Ridge.

**AREA:** New Discovery.

**DEVELOPER:** United Communities.

**PRICE:** Villas will be priced from \$325,000 to \$350,000, with chateau units from \$150,000 to \$250,000. Manor Village units range from \$140,000 to \$200,000.

**LOCATION:** The WedgeWoods will be located off Discovery Ridge Lane in New Discovery. Take Highway 8 west of Glenmore Trail and turn left at 69th Street. Go past the existing show home parade and turn left at Discovery Ridge Lane.

**INFORMATION:** For information, call Statesman Corp. at 256-4151.

"We found that while the cost was more than wood on per-square-foot basis, it was outweighed by the advantages, including construction time," says Moore. Besides minimizing the fire risk, the use of recycled steel by Mega Building Systems also allows larger spans of space to be covered, giving designers more flexibility when planning condo suites, he says.

Other benefits include the practical elimination of shrinking and warpage common to wood construction, preventing such problems as settling, cracking or nail pops in drywall, says Mann.

"We had been looking at this process prior to the Waterford fire, but it was always our intention that we would introduce it to the Calgary marketplace with the WedgeWoods," he says from his office in Richmond Hill.

The project marks the culmination of two years of studying the Mega Building Systems' process, with Statesman purchasing the exclusive rights to the technology in southern Alberta and in Arizona.

While the WedgeWoods' first phase in the United Communities neighbourhood of New Discovery will use wood-frame construction for 10 walk-out bungalow villas, later phases will see the new non-combustible system introduced into Calgary, says Mann.

Statesman plans to build 568 apartment condominiums in three five-storey buildings in New Discovery.

While the company received approval from the city for buildings eight-storeys high, at the request of the community, it only went to five storeys — allowing the structures to be below the tops of nearby trees.

The WedgeWoods is being developed just outside the northern boundary of Griffith Park, a natural area that follows the winding banks of the Elbow River. While it has been left in its natural state, it has been blended into the overall development of New Discovery.

"This is a very sensitive area," says Mann. "It's a boreal forest area with thousands of trees — some that have been standing for as long as 200 years — so we don't want to risk damaging it."

Rather than having heavy trucks move across the property, a special crane at the WedgeWoods will lift components right onto the building site. Many of the components will be pre-fabricated off-site to do as little damage as possible.

A professional forester will also work with Statesman when trees have to be removed. About 62 per cent of the eight-hectare site will be left in its natural state, with a further 12 per cent revegetated following the end of construction, says Mann.

During the next four years, Statesman plans to construct 10 villas fronting Discovery Ridge Lane, as well as the constructing apartment buildings

that will be tucked into the trees.

"It's going to be like living in Banff or Canmore, right among the trees, but you'll be right here in Calgary," says Mann. "And in many of the suites, people will be able to hug a tree right from their balcony."

Priced between \$325,000 and \$350,000, the villas will be constructed in pods of three or four units, with each measuring about 2,300 square feet.

Apartment units in what will be the

Chateau building will average about 1,700 square feet and they are to cost between \$150,000 to \$250,000, depending on their location within the building. The Manor Village will have an amenities centre, theatre, pool and games room, with units averaging 950 square feet priced from \$140,000 to \$200,000.

The area for the villas has been staked off and first buyers are expected to take possession next summer, says marketing director Alissa Mann.

"We haven't really started marketing the project and we already have sold three of the 10 villas," she says. "There has been a high level of interest in what we're doing here."

The WedgeWoods will offer housing opportunities for everyone from young professionals, to mature buyers and seniors, she says.