

SPECIAL FEATURE: NEW HOMES

SCENIC VIEWS FROM EVERY CONDO

Kathy McCormick

Spring Creek, the comprehensive community in the heart of Canmore, has outgrown Canmore's humble beginnings as a tiny mining town west of Calgary.

The development headed up by Frank Kernick is already its own 'village' complete with a variety of housing to meet varying needs around a lively commercial area and now, a recently opened hotel.

And of course, the setting is hard to resist with small creeks bordering it, the beautiful Rocky Mountain backdrop and the proximity to Canmore's vibrant main streets.

The 70-acre development sits on land the Kernick family has owned since 1927.

"The land stayed in the family, but the dairy farm, which brought milk to the miners here — the main industry in tiny village at the time — closed when the mines closed and it became a trailer park and campground," says Kernick.

"I bought the land from the family and, since I had been in the development field in Canmore for 15 years, I knew I had to put that land to the best use possible."

So far, Spring Creek has a selection of condominium homes, villas, estate home sites, an active-living seniors' residence, and a luxury mountain lodge with vacation suites.

"We developed Spring Creek a bit differently than the norm," Kernick says. "We did all the studies first — geo-technical, environmental, etc. — then hired



Spring Creek holds itself to a high environmental standard, all of the units use geo-thermal heating. CONTRIBUTED

an architect and planner.

"Our team vision was that since it was so close to the downtown, we wanted density, but it had to be low on the outskirts so as to allow everyone views of the creeks and mountains, and higher in the middle. And there needed to be a commercial component."

Buildings in Spring Creek are four storeys maximum with stores and businesses occupying the first floor, while those buildings closer to the creeks step down to two storeys - and the beautiful architecture has a definite mountain appeal with

locally-sourced Rundlestone and timber.

The latest building to open - The Malcolm Hotel - sits at the entrance into the community.

To date, five condominium lodges have been built, as well as the seniors' residence and the limited number of villas and single-family homes.

Jack Pine Lodge is the sixth building that will be built, and sales for this 49-suite cadmium development have a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units available. Homes start at \$479,000. A limited number of live/work units are also included.

Twelve of these units sold on the first weekend sales opened.

Of course the 1988 Olympics opened Canmore to the world and the little town flourished and grew.

"Canmore typically had about 350 to 450 sales per year until 2008," says Kernick. "Then with the downturn, that changed to just 30 for four or five years. We lost a lot of builders and trades."

But unlike Calgary, the town is again bustling with activity. "In the last three or four years, it's been busy again."

In fact, says Spring Creek Realty sales director Ross Jansen, "Canmore has consistently shown a resiliency in the face of a slower market in Calgary. We've had a substantial increase in home sales and significant increase in property value."

Some of the initial buyers, says Kernick, bought for recreational use. "Some were weekenders to start, but ended up living here permanently." He says most buyers so far, up to 90 per cent, are Canadian.

A full 30 per cent of Spring Creek is dedicated to green space and the development includes 2.5 kilometres of pathways and a crossing over the creek, a boardwalk to downtown Canmore, Alpine garden courtyards, a children's playground, and central water plaza. The homes are all built to high environmental standards, including geo-thermal heating.

By completion, expected to be another 10 years, the 'village' will have 1,000 residential units as well as the commercial aspect.

Luxurious vacations at the Malcolm Hotel

It's hard to imagine that Canmore's latest luxury hotel sits on land where developer Frank Kernick helped his grandfather milk cows not that long ago, but like his grandfather, Kernick has an entrepreneurial spirit that has become a welcome addition to the former mining town west of Calgary.

The Malcolm Hotel officially opened recently with great fanfare and more than 500 people celebrating — and no wonder. The \$43-million, 124-room luxury hotel is the latest addition to the beautiful Spring Creek neighbourhood that Kernick envisioned more than a dozen years ago.

"We have created a 'village' in the heart of Canmore," says Kernick. "Our team envisioned a place close to downtown where we could create some density, but in a way that worked to enhance this beautiful setting — and it made sense to have a hotel up front."

Just steps from Canada's first National Park, Canmore attracts visitors year-round with its ample outdoor activities at the doorstep and the majestic Rocky Mountain backdrop.

The Malcolm Hotel is the first traditional hotel built in Canmore in the last 20 years - and it stays close to its roots with its contemporary mountain feel.

Amenities include outdoor hot tubs and swimming pool, a fitness centre and mountain views from the second floor open-air mezzanine.

It features venues for conferences, weddings and other events, and includes a restaurant, bar and outdoor patio.

"The hotel will bring the character of Spring Creek inside because it is a big part of this community," Kernick says.

Two more boutique-styled hotels are planned for the area.

For information, check hotelmalcolm.ca.
Kathy McCormick



The hotel's backdrop features the Rocky Mountains. CONTRIBUTED