

New apartments break ground



Supplied photo

From left: Coun. Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan) takes her hard hat alongside Nigel Furgus, president of Paragon Design Build, before breaking ground at The Jefferson, a six-storey residential and commercial building going up at across from Maples Collegiate on Jefferson Avenue.

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THE MAPLES

A new development at 1325 Jefferson Ave. is underway after a groundbreaking that took place two weeks ago.

“It feels great,” said Nigel Furgus, president of Paragon Design Build. “Because I’ve been wanting to do a project in this part of the city for some time.”

The building will go up directly across the street from Maples Collegiate.

Furgus said the project aims to

bring value to the neighbourhood.

“We bring a high-end finish with a below-market rent,” Furgus said.

Rents for the building are scheduled to start at \$1,085, Furgus said. The building will have 72 apartments, with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom suites.

Each unit will have stainless steel

appliances, in-suite laundry and quartz countertops in its kitchen, the company said in a press release.

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Furgus said the entire building will have access to high-speed internet.

"We're providing that in all of our buildings," he said. "I don't see it very often, but that is kind of our standard over at Paragon."

Furgus said that as an immigrant from Trinidad, the project hold special significance for him.

"We understand that there's a diverse population in The Maples, and we're speaking to that by doing some larger units and other little things," Furgus said.

One of those little things is to connect each unit's ventilation directly outdoors, rather than through the building, because of some of the more heavily spiced dishes that area's population may favour.

So, if residents want to smell the delicious aromas of chana masala or jollof rice, they'll have to cook it themselves.

Furgus said the building will offer "affordable housing" to the area. As the city defines affordable housing as housing that costs, after taxes and utilities, 30 per cent of a household's income, this will certainly be true for some and untrue for others in an area with an average income of approximately \$38,000.

For the average household in this scenario, the cheapest apartments would cost, excluding hydro but including inter-

net, about 34 per cent of its income.

And according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's latest rental market report, Winnipeg's overall average rent is \$1,107, with one-bedroom suites running the average renter \$991 per month, meaning apartments in the building will likely come in a touch above the city average.

Furgus's other term, "affordable luxury," may be more appropriate; it's rare to see amenities such as underground parking or in-suite laundry in an apartment building that ranges into these rent prices.

Coun. Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan) supports the project. "I grew up in The Maples, and I'm super excited about this project," she said. "It's the biggest infill project the Maples has had so far."

Sharma said the building should attract new people to the area, which will benefit the neighbourhood as a whole.

"It's obviously reciprocal," Sharma said. "There's lots of amenities for the residents, and then they too will be shopping in the community and contributing to enhancing the neighbourhood. Maybe they're going to be serving on a local parent council or on the community centre board."

The building plans also include a sidewalk nearby, which Sharma said will increase liveability in the area, especially for those with mobility issues.

Developers hope to have the building completed by March 2023.



Photo by Cody Sellar

Nigel Furgus, president of Paragon Design Build, elbow bumps with Coun. Devi Sharma at the future site of The Jefferson.