



Construction Set to Launch at Hingham Mixed-Use Development

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Heralded in World War II, the Hingham Shipyard provided ships to aid the allies and was awarded an "E" for Excellence by the Navy. Today, the shipyard is back in the spotlight.

The 130-acre site will soon feature over 400 condominiums and townhouses, along with restaurants, shops, walking trails and a park. Construction of a 235-unit apartment community and clubhouse by AvalonBay Communities is under way, and Lennar Urban Properties is building 150 townhouses.

Boston-based Samuels & Assoc. is developing The Launch, a mixed-use project that will consist of 240,000 square feet of retail, office restaurants, and 92 luxury condominiums called The Moorings. Samuels also is leasing 30,000 square feet of office space above retail shops and building a day care center and a bank.

The architect, Boston-based Elkus Manfredi Architects, kept the concept of a maritime village in mind when designing the look of the site.

"The buildings will look like they might have existed here long ago," said Leslie Cohen, Samuels' vice president of development. "They will be larger in scale than they would've been, but will stay true to New England and will have an authentic feel."

Located adjacent to Hewitt's Cove Marina, the project includes 350 slips and 150 moorings and features three residential buildings, each with first-floor retail. Elkus Manfredi used a combination of brick and wood siding for the exterior, with lots of glass for natural light.

Samuels has signed leases with anchor tenants for the commercial space including Bed Bath and Beyond, Old Navy, fitness center Bodyscapes and Patriot Cinema.

"We are hoping since all these major clients have signed on, it will entice other smaller businesses to come in," said Cohen. "The Launch will have a downtown feel to it with wide sidewalks, tree-lined streets and active storefronts."

A plaza will be created in the northern portion of the site and will have direct access to the waterfront, she said. The cinema will anchor the plaza, she added.

In addition, the MBTA commuter ferry terminal is located on site and is accompanied by a 1,000-car parking lot.

“The Launch will be a lot more than a shopping destination,” said Cohen. “It will be a place for people to come and meet all their needs. You can live, work and play here, as well as easily commute to Boston.”

‘Single-Level Living’

The 20 pre-existing buildings were demolished in June 2006. The only structure remaining from the original shipyard is an inoperative smokestack.

Work on the roads and utilities for The Launch and The Moorings began in June 2006 and will be completed in July. Site work will be finished in the fall, said Cohen, and construction is expected to begin over the next couple of weeks. The stores will open next spring with a rolling occupancy for the condominiums. Prices for the units range depending on size and location, from \$400,000 to over \$1 million.

Cohen said she isn’t worried about competition from the other residences available on the site. “Our residences will be single-level living,” she said. “There is such a wide product differential on site, from town homes to apartments to our flats, that we don’t think the competition will be too great.”

Still, The Hastings Co., offers 45 luxury townhomes at BackRiver, a new residential neighborhood within walking distance to stores, restaurants and the Boston commuter boat, and minutes away from the fairways of South Shore Country Club, Black Rock Country Club and the Boston Golf Club. The units are priced from \$875,000. In addition, next year the Hingham-based firm will unveil Hingham Square Townhomes, an adult community offering 15 luxury units in the downtown.

The Launch will face retail competition from the Derby Street Shoppes. In 2004, Newton developer S. R. Weiner & Assoc. opened the South Shore’s first large “lifestyle center” off Route 3. The high-end, 450,000-square-foot shopping mall anchored by Barnes & Noble, R.E.I., Kohl’s and Whole Foods Market features 78 retailers, boutiques, fine restaurants and casual eateries in an open-air environment.

Other area competition will come from Marina Bay in Quincy on Boston Harbor, home to residences, shops and the ocean; The Village at Colony Place, a 150,000-square-foot lifestyle center opened last fall off Route 3 in Plymouth; and a 530,000-square-foot development in Dedham called Legacy Place, which broke ground earlier this spring.

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