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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2 | 2010 | EDITOR MICHAEL SAGES 604.605.2467 | HOMES@VANCOUVERSUN.COM

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PROJECT PROFILE:
Newlyweds' first home a marriage of Georgian, modern styles at MOSAIC's Taylor. **E2**



<p>INTERVIEW E10</p> <p>'Villagers' speak up Three Millennium Water buyers – a banker, a broker and a senator – share their pride-of-place certainties.</p> 	<p>LIVING GREEN</p> <p>Ready when you are Extending the life of older structures and reusing more materials has begun to take new prominence, Kim Davis reports.</p>	<p>SOLD (BOUGHT) E14</p> <p>\$2 million on the westside The builders of a home on Vancouver's westside give it up after almost 30 years, \$2.05 million the price of their farewell.</p> 
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PROJECT PROFILE

Gastown and our future — part deux

Heritage Paris Block and its new annex mirror redefinition of original Vancouver neighbourhood

Paris Annex

Project location: 47 West Hastings St.
Project size: 17 apartment homes
Residence size: 659 to 1,127 sq. ft, some with rooftop decks
Prices: Apartments from \$360,000; two-level penthouses, from \$650,000
Developer: The Salient Group
Design: Gair Williamson Architects, with Ankenman Marchand Architects
Interiors: Evoke International Design
Sales centre: Courtyard of the Garage building, 12 Water St.
Hours: Noon to 5 p.m., Saturday to Thursday
Telephone: 604-689-LOFT (5638)
E-mail: Heather Hodgson, heather@parisannex.com
Occupancy: Fall 2011

BY CHRISTINA SYMONS

As a concrete metaphor for the thoughtful street-level reinvention of Gastown, there's arguably no better example than what is happening at 47 West Hastings.

Here, two buildings — one new, one with 100-year-old roots — will fuse. Esthetically and otherwise, the result is a marriage of contrasts, but respectfully so. The tension gives each building its due, a merger that is deliberate, emotive and refreshing.

Robert Fung, president of the Salient Group, developer of the newly released Paris Annex and existing Paris Block apartments, makes no apologies for the fact that his neighbourhood of choice is still evolving. Instead, like many who work here, who hang out at the cool bars and eateries in the evening, or who call the community home, he thrives on the transformative norm.

After all, Gastown has not lost its heritage or character, despite its continuing social challenges. It's undeniably hip right now — and Fung knows it.

"Paris Annex is the evolution of the heritage Paris Block building, but it's really analogous to the evolution of the neighbourhood," Fung says, referring to the modern infill sequel that will be soon be attached to the restored original heritage building next door.

Similarly, the overall rejuvenation of Gastown and the Woodward's district, where the two Paris buildings reside, has sparked a renewed vibe that is fueling the future while respecting both history and the existing community.

"Physically and emotionally, this area was simply neglected," Fung says of the past. "The work on the buildings, like the neighbourhood itself, needed to be done sensitively."

Fung and his team are highly regarded for such an approach. Their well-integrated buildings and restorations include the Taylor Building, Terminus and the Garage, which average five to seven storeys and are intimately scaled to the surrounding community.

The Paris Block, and now the Paris Annex, are named after Pierre Paris, a hard-working Vancouver footwear-maker who owned the original property. The names are not a marketing cue, adds Fung, noting that Salient is after authenticity in everything it does.

"We're not 30 storeys above [the community] or at arm's length," Fung adds.

When asked if there can be as much potential for profit in these small heritage-style projects as the larger-scale towers that loom around their outskirts, Fung doesn't miss a beat.

Heritage and infill projects add value to the fabric of Vancouver in ways that can't be easily quantified, he says. Their significance is residual and they are "emotionally profitable," Fung adds.

Indeed, the Salient Group and its projects such as Paris Annex are not about mass production, or even mass appeal. They cater to discerning folks who appreciate a richly layered experience and refined esthetic. Most of the suites in the building are unique, with linear layouts that are anything but cookie-cutter. Likewise, the buyer demographic is suitably original.

"You really can't pin down our buyer," says Fung. "But it's an urbanist's lifestyle we're offering."

Sleek concrete and glass construction with expansive windows form the exterior expression of the annex building, complemented by diffused glass enclosing the bedrooms, and polished concrete floors.

The interiors, by Vancouver-based Evoke International Design, have a minimalist fashion, with gloss or veneer Italian cabinetry, integrated appliances, subdued marble baths and forward-thinking pre-wired technology.

Building amenities are straight-up, designed to further a sense of community, with a rooftop deck and long communal outdoor dining table. The two-level penthouse lofts will also have direct access to the roof and cityscape.

"We're celebrating downtown and



PHOTOS: JON MURRAY/PNG

The Paris Annex show suite combines modern living and heritage architecture. Minimalist interiors, by Evoke International Design, include integrated appliances and marble baths. Developer Robert Fung, left in the photo at the left, and architect Gair Williamson look over some of the drawings of the downtown Vancouver new-home project.

that rooftop experience," says Fung. "Our city is spectacular, but not just because of the water and mountains."

Annex design architect Gair Williamson also enjoys working in the Gastown neighbourhood and couldn't agree more. "Vancouver used to be known as spectacular by nature, but now we're becoming spectacular by culture," he contends, referring to Gastown's creative, collaborative and artistic core.

Overall, Fung's product has been a locus for this, Williamson notes.

Best known for seeking out and restoring a select inventory of Gastown's near-derelect buildings, Fung

is as passionate about instilling new life into these old properties as other developers are to capitalize on Vancouver's last remaining waterfront.

For Fung, the assets in Gastown are covetable — perhaps even more so than Vancouver's higher profile addresses — for their heritage, history and potential, not to mention their soul.

"The original architecture is rare, almost unbeatable when it comes to anything else in the city," Fung believes. Salient builds on the premise of that uniqueness with boutique retail and residential spaces, he adds.

"I do believe that the smaller projects

in this neighbourhood have uncommon value," says Fung. "After all, we're not making any more heritage buildings."

Jenny Chow, a project architect on the Paris Annex team, has bought into the vision for the new property, both figuratively and literally. She's planning on purchasing a unit at the annex and is looking forward to moving to Gastown next year from Burnaby.

"I love this neighbourhood," says Chow. "I do everything here — work here, bicycle here, eat here."

The two buildings are physically connected, so at the end of the day, those living in Paris Annex will step through

the history of the Paris Block and into the modern age. Like Gastown itself, it's a fascinating urban case study.

All around, an influx of European-inspired boutiques, restaurants and bars, with contemporary fashion, design and furnishings, have created a symbiotic drive to support creative culture, business and community.

"I have the greatest respect for the existing community in the Downtown Eastside, and hope that our projects help to bring balance and increase diversity in the area," says Fung, noting that Vancouverites have been apologetic about the east side for a long time.

"What feels refreshing is that the communal undertone of apology is being lifted from the area, for many reasons," Fung says. "And yet, the community still maintains its heart as our city's most economically and socially diverse neighbourhood and therefore, our most exciting."

Special to The Sun