

# Canadian builder picks Scottsdale for 1st U.S. project



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(Photo: Landmark Homes USA)

A Canadian company has chosen a small parcel in downtown Scottsdale to launch its big entry into the United States homebuilding market.

Landmark Group has been operating in Canada since 1977 and has built roughly 15,000 homes across that country. The company has now set its sights on the United States and wanted to make a splash with its first project.

That project will be Aerium, a 27-unit condominium complex slated to be built on 1.4 acres at 3520 N. 70th St., bordered by 70th Street, Sixth Street and Supai Way.

The Scottsdale Development Review Board, at its July 17 meeting, approved the site plan, building elevations and landscape plan for the project.

Dennis Kissler, an adjacent property owner, told the board that nearby residents are concerned the complex doesn't provide adequate guest parking, and therefore will lead to visitors parking on the street in front of their homes.

Greg Bloemberg, planning staff coordinator, said the complex includes seven guest-parking spaces, and unless residents want to pursue restrictive parking in their neighborhood, there's not much the city can do to prevent visitors from parking along the street.

Landmark owns the property, which used to house an apartment complex and has been vacant since 2005. The company plans to invest \$12 million in Aerium.

The complex will include five three-story buildings. Each unit will include a ground-level garage. Amenities will include a lap pool, an organic herb garden and outdoor cooking facilities where local chefs will be brought in quarterly to prepare dishes for the residents.

It also includes more than 19,200 square feet of open space.

"There are 27 residences and we certainly expect some out-of-town buyers looking for a second home in Scottsdale, so there will be anywhere from 30 and 60 people living there," said Ken Johnson, vice president of strategic marketing for Landmark Homes USA. "Each residence has a two-car garage, so we're thinking that will appeal to couples as well as singles."

Aerium is part of a trend of returning condominium development in Scottsdale after the housing market collapse of 2007-08. Numerous other condominium projects are under construction in Scottsdale, along with new apartments.

"I think that condominium living will always be in vogue for those who don't want to maintain their own homes, but would prefer for others to do that, and financing is back for condominiums on the open market," Johnson said. "Back when the market dipped, it was harder for owners to get financing for condominiums, but that has returned and we're very pleased to see that."

The Aerium sales office will be open in September, and construction will start in October, he said.

"We'll probably be delivering our first units by the Super Bowl," Johnson said. "It will be built in five stages, but there are only 27 units so it will go pretty quick, probably a nine-month cycle for those 27 homes."

In the meantime, Landmark is planning other communities in the metro Phoenix area. Its next complex will be Aerium Encore, which will be built only three blocks south of Aerium, he said.

In addition, it is planning to build Center 8 on Roosevelt in downtown Phoenix.

"We're building a brand in the United States," Johnson said. "But it will reflect the same lifestyle living that's offered in Canada today, the same level of detail and quality, and attention to sustainability that really marks the way Landmark is changing the way homes are built across North America."

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