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SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND SFGATE.COM | Sunday, November 1, 2009 EB



SMART GROWTH

**New lofts part
of West Oakland
transformation**

Cannery units Central Station's first

By Valerie Fahvey
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

West Oakland is undergoing a transformation with Central Station, a series of housing developments in the neighborhood around the historic Southern Pacific Train Station.

Approved by city leaders five years ago, the plan calls for more than 1,000 homes to replace 26 dusty acres. They'll be clustered around the restored Beaux Arts-style 16th Street Train Station, the terminus of the Transcontinental Railroad.

So far, there are 163 units in the former Pacific Cannery building — about half have been sold — and Zephyr Gate's 130-unit townhouse project. Ninety-nine below-market-rate apartments are in the works for what is known as the Prescott Oakland-Point neighborhood.

The area has long been a sort of no-man's-land. West Oakland was cut off from the rest of the city on four sides by the Oakland Army Base, West Oakland BART, the West Grand Avenue freeway entrance to the Bay Bridge and a lumbering double-decker portion of Interstate 880 called the Cypress Structure.

Then 20 years ago, the Loma Prieta earthquake struck, rendering the Cypress a pile of rubble. Shortly afterward the Army base was shuttered and an area that had long been



Depending on location, you can see various sights from loft windows.

cut off from the rest of Oakland was suddenly a lot the way it used to be — a regular neighborhood of Victorians and warehouses, easily accessible and well placed.

The area changed slowly, just as Jack London Square did. The artists infiltrate first, moving in for the cheap live-work space; then

the hipsters arrive, coming for its rough-edged authenticity; and finally the developers.

One of the first entrants, Holliday Development, is building the Pacific Cannery Lofts in the initial phase of the Central Station community. The 163-unit project is an adaptive reuse of a historic warehouse,

the 1911 Pacific Coast Cannery building, which was shuttered during the Great Depression and has sat empty for 50 years. Ninety-nine lofts are centered on three interior courtyards in the original cannery building. New structures integrated into the historic rehab offer 49 more flats and 15 three-



Above: This view of the bedroom at Pacific Cannery Lofts shows the exposed concrete columns that appear throughout the complex. Left: The dining area adjoins the L-shaped kitchen on the main factory floor; sliding doors lead to a large patio.

Photos by Holliday Development

story townhomes that sit about a quarter mile from the West Oakland BART Station.

Experts say it's far greener to move closer to places you need to get to than it is just installing sustainable wood flooring or photovoltaic lights. Rick Holliday, founder and president of Holliday Development,

did both. He built next to existing transit and incorporated enough energy-saving items to have the project Build It Green-certified.

Urban planners call this "smart growth." Specifically, smart growth means creating housing close to existing urban infrastructure

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and the founder

COVER STORY

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and job centers while encouraging the next wave of improvements, such as grocery stores and retail shops.

The Pacific Cannery Lofts is made up of modern one-level flats, open two-level lofts and three-story town homes ranging from one-bedroom, one-bath floor plans to two-bedroom, two-bath configurations. Prices range from \$249,000 to \$495,000 for homes between 750 and 2,000 square feet. One-bedroom units have one parking space and two-bedrooms have two.

But that car is hardly a necessity because 271 trains hit the West Oakland BART Station daily and the train ride to the Embarcadero station takes just six minutes. There are trains every 1½ minutes during commute time, and the property offers quick access to Interstates 80, 880, 580 and Highway 24. HOA fees range from \$275 to \$400 and cover water, sewer, garbage, common area maintenance, dog washing station, bike lounge, parking garage, insurance and reserves.

Some of the units have views, too. Depending on which direction you're facing, you might see Angel Island and Mount Tamalpais, the Oakland waterfront or downtown Oakland and the Berkeley hills.

In addition, Bay Area Backroads donated 35 touring bicycles for residents' use, and there is parking for 300 bikes. Downstairs is the Velo Lounge, with bike repair workbenches, repair stands, air fill-up station and private lockers, and the Laundra-



Holiday Development

The Pacific Cannery Lofts complex has been certified as Build It Green.

mutt, a dog-washing station.

Of the three types of homes, the Signature lofts were my favorite. Ranging from 1,000 to 1,600 square feet, they feel open and airy and flooded with light from the wall of windows at the back of the unit. The live-work lofts boast double-height ceilings (as high as 19 feet), mezzanines and exposed concrete columns, ducts and utilities.

Entered from the main factory floor, the

front door opens to the half bath on the right and the kitchen-cum-living/dining space with L-shaped kitchen to the left. The minimalist kitchen has Energy Star stainless steel Whirlpool appliances, open shelving and Corian countertops. The living-dining area is at the front of a space with sliding doors leading to a good-size patio. (It's actually the original loading dock from when the Cannery was operational and leads outside the build-

ing.) Up the metal-railed stairs are the master bedroom and full bath with a generously sized closet overlooking the floor below. The master bath, which has a Japanese sauna feel to it, has bamboo flooring, a powder-coated, custom-made vanity with vessel sink, built-in towel rack and lower shelf, as well as good-size shower and tub. The stackable washer and dryer sit behind an accordion door. Extra storage is

tucked beneath the stairs.

Within the building are three interior courtyards plus a fourth green space called the Grove. Two of the interior courtyards were the original enormous lightwells from the cannery that were doubled in size and made open air as part of the project.

Pacific Cannery lofts offer an extensive design center run by Thomas Jameson, an award-winning designer who previously owned Item Studio. Buyers can customize their unit by choosing lighting, flooring, window coverings and built-in closets and storage units, all of which can be included in the mortgage as rolling upgrades.

The project has partnered with the city of Oakland to offer a limited number of down payment assistance loans. The loans are \$125,000 at 3 percent simple interest deferred until resale and are for first-time home buyers

Pacific Cannery Lofts

1200 Pine St., Oakland

Developer: Holiday Development

Architect: David Baker + Partners Architects

City: Oakland

Model: Price: \$325,000

Square footage: 1,100

Price per square foot: About \$295

Bedrooms: 1

Bathrooms: 1½

Parking: 1 (one per bedroom)

Monthly homeowner dues: \$325

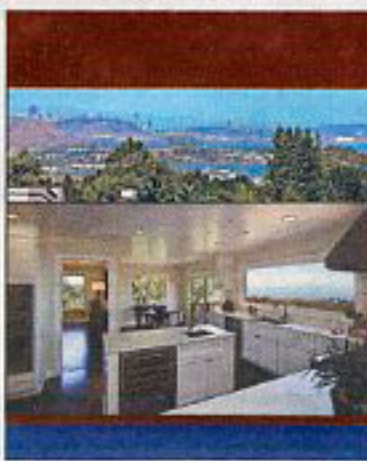
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