

Somewhere
*special*Heather Wood visits the Hamptons, where top-of-the-line homes
boast dazzling panoramas of the South Shore

In the shadow of Gibbs Hill Lighthouse sit the Hamptons, a new residential complex which boasts sweeping views of the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean and verdant woodland reserve.

Just over half the planned 28 homes have been completed thus far, their stunning vistas made possible through superior elevations of 100 and 200 feet above sea level.

Work on the Hamptons on Gibbs Hill began two and a half years ago. All but two of the homes built thus far have sold, appreciated for their traditional Bermudian architecture, their proximity to popular attractions, and of course, the views.

"The Hamptons on Gibbs Hill is a unique and now proven residential development located just to the west of the landmark Gibbs Hill Lighthouse along sleepy St. Anne's Road," said Kevin Cross, president of WhiteCross Development Limited, the company behind the project. "The homes and surrounding landscape are professionally designed to provide open

space, privacy, security and views beyond comparison. Each home has been carefully situated to provide maximum views of the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean or the woodland reserve area located to the south.

"The property is ideally located — with quick access to both South Shore and Middle Roads. It is also within close proximity to several South Shore beaches, golf courses, hotel properties and the amenities and restaurants they provide, and the protected harbours of Jews and Riddell's Bay."

Involved are twelve acres of property, which extend to the South Road, although development is limited to four-and-a-half acres of land.

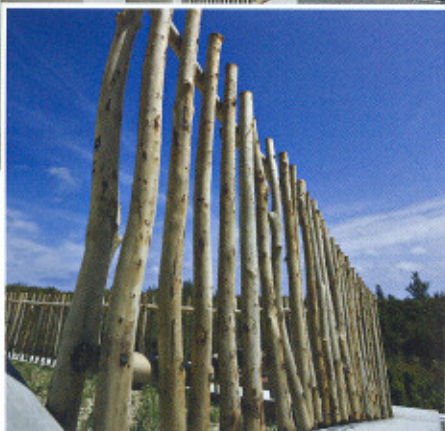
"Of the entire original estate, less than five acres is being disturbed with the remaining portion of the property to the south zoned woodland reserve and arable land," Mr. Cross said, adding that the four acres of arable land are being used for sod farming, and also house a nursery which provides plants for the residential complex.

The development of the Hamptons on Gibbs Hill was planned over three phases. According to Mr. Cross the completed complex will boast eight three-bedroom townhouses and 20 detached homes. "The remaining homes available for sale consist of five spacious, fully-detached homes, one large estate home and eight townhouses. The detached homes are roughly 3,000 square feet of living space with three bedrooms and three full baths. The eight town homes also have three bedrooms, and two-and-a-half baths. Each townhouse boasts more than 2,000 square feet of living space plus a lower-level garage and verandah."

The estate home boasts four bedrooms and four baths, and its owner will enjoy the luxury of 4,600 square feet of space. The luxury home also offers a garage and allows space to install a private pool.

Parking is assigned, with extra space available for guests.

Available to Bermudians and holders of Permanent Resident Certificates, homes at the



Hamptons on Gibbs Hill have sold well because their attributes are so obvious, Mr. Cross said.

"All the houses were designed to maximise views of the south or the southwest and the houses have been extremely well received. Everything has been sold in Phase One except two units. Many of our buyers have acknowledged their functionality and their value. They're priced under \$475 per square foot. If you did a market comparison, you'd find them to be most competitive with products that are selling for higher sums, but don't offer the same combination of views, type of neighbourhood and square footage. They're also well designed. There's a very efficient use of space — it maximises the use of the house and makes them liveable and function well."

As it stands, the Hamptons on Gibbs Hill is testament to the developers' early vision. As described by Mr. Cross, "a series of luxury homes, tastefully designed to provide many traditional Bermuda architectural features, each constructed to exacting detail and made available to buyers ready for occupancy." There were, however, some challenges along the way owing to the unique lay of the land.

"M&M Construction Ltd. did a fantastic job on a very difficult site," he said. "The property starts just a little bit under 200 feet above sea level and ends at 100 feet above sea level on the last phase. So it drops ten storeys. It's very hard to deal with the roads and the elevation of the houses to get it all to fit and function."

"We had about a 30-foot drop between any two given houses. In order to make it all work and still look really soft and beautiful, we separated homes using a combination of walls and landscape timbers," he added, highlighting one of several fences on the property carved in rustic fashion out of an All Spice tree. "We did it to soften the required fencing; we wanted to make it look more rustic rather than using PVC fencing or concrete walls. We wanted it to blend in with the natural landscape."

Landscaping provided a similar test, he said. "Malcolm Griffith, our landscape architect, had to be very creative, in fact I call him the project's magician. But what I found really impressive is that everything was done here — we have our own earth-moving equipment, we make our own cement. We have our own crane. The project team here at the Hamptons does almost everything."

WhiteCross Development designed the houses in conjunction with the project architects, Botelho Wood Architects. The homes do allow for some individualisation; an option exercised by many of the present owners.

"We've done a number of upgrades for different people. We've added patios with Bermuda-stone walls. One of our owners has a recording studio. We've closed off doors and modified kitchens to give a 'pass-through'."

"Buyers of detached homes were able to select their granite and hardwood cabinetry and their tiles. It allowed them to add a bit of personalisation to the base house, so they all have a house that's similar, but they can add their own personal touch to the floors and the kitchen."

One of the two homes still on offer in Phase One of the Hamptons development is a detached, three-bedroom home. Mr. Cross, who was eager to complete the unit, selected its tile, granite and cabinetry.

"It's the last house of its kind," Mr. Cross

explained. "We're not building any more of this style of house here."

A sheltered verandah provides outdoor space, the area suitable for enjoying the stunning scenery at the Hamptons or relaxing with friends or family. The patio floor is tiled in a charmingly simple style described as Old World, selected by Mr. Cross for its 'rougher finish'. The chosen colour is Cavalier beige.

A magnificent cedar door guards the main entrance. According to Mr. Cross, Virginia cedar was selected because it is so similar to Bermuda cedar.

"The idea was to give the house a traditional Bermuda appearance," he said. "This cedar gives as close a look to the Bermuda cedar as you can get."

The door opens to a generous foyer. In the centre, a staircase of oak leads to the second storey. To the left is the living room. Faced by two French doors, each with two sidelights, it showcases perhaps the home's most impressive view of the woodland reserve and the south shore breakers.

"One of the features that I wanted in this living room — and it's subtle — is a wall of light," Mr. Cross explained. "I wanted people to sit here and admire the views, the impressive views out to the south and the southwest, the southwest breakers."

The house has tiling throughout, except in the living room where Mr. Cross has allowed for hardwood bamboo flooring.

"Buyers have the option of upgrading to hardwood," he explained. "So if they decide they want a room laid with hardwood instead of tile, I give them a credit back for the tile and put in the hardwood."

There's also the option of cooling down in Bermuda's warmer months with either a remote-controlled ceiling fan, made by Emerson, or air conditioning. "I'm not a particular fan of the appearance of wall-mounted air



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conditioning units," he said.

"One thing I wanted, for the living room especially, was that it should be elegant — one of the homes, for example, has a white grand piano in it. I wanted a unit that you wouldn't notice, so a ceiling-mounted cassette unit was installed, something that wasn't obtrusive."

Recessed lighting, placed throughout the house, adds to that effect.

In the living room there is also a remote-control operated gas fireplace, which is sure to be appreciated during the damp winters here.

The kitchen is outfitted with stainless steel appliances and gas cookers, its cabinetry made of solid wood. Options include a reverse osmosis system, enabling filtered water in the sink as well as the icemaker in the fridge. The tile is described as true beige, and is made by Florida Tile from their Ankara tile suite.

"I actually selected the finishes for this house because it wasn't sold, but what normally happens is that we sell them before they're finished and the owner picks out all the trims and the splash and the granite. The buyers even get to pick their cabinet pulls, their hardware. I wanted to give them the sense that they had something to do with the design of their home." In this particular unit, Mr. Cross selected a medium cherry wood for the cabinetry.

The homes are purchased with appliances included, in this case, everything from a refrigerator to a washer and dryer.

Off the kitchen is a laundry room, complete



company's Mason Suite.

The impressive master bedroom offers a picturesque view, accessible from a tiny patio or from behind the impact-resistant French doors.

"You can put a little chair out here, have your coffee, watch the southwest breaker. If you're lucky a whale will come by — which is something a number of the construction guys have got to see while they were up on the roof."

Closets on either side of a corridor lead to the ensuite bathroom that boasts two sinks with a granite countertop, a Jacuzzi tub and a free-standing shower. The tub offers clear views to the south through a deliberately placed window.


The smallest of the three bedrooms was designed to capture the day's light, its airiness accentuated by the air conditioning and ceiling fan in place. The room's design includes a fair-

ly large closet, offering ample storage space.

"The second room is actually larger than the master but it doesn't have an ensuite bathroom," Mr. Cross explained. "What it does have is a huge closet and fabulous views looking south."

The two rooms share the third bathroom, which includes a six-foot sunken tub and a separate shower.

"The homes and surrounding landscape are professionally designed to provide open space, privacy, security and views beyond comparison," Mr. Cross said.

"The Hamptons has an exclusive Southampton location. It's on a private estate road, expansive south shore and woodland reserve views, spacious rooms, verandahs and a fully-landscaped estate — we think it's something special." 

with washer, dryer and significant storage space. As well, it holds access to a relatively modern concept, a central distribution system.

Explained Mr. Cross: "All the houses are pre-wired with a central distribution system for telephone, cable television and networking. Every room is pre-wired for networking capabilities."

A French door provides access to the home's backyard, a patio of paver stones, and its boundaries are enclosed with a traditional Bermuda limestone wall.

Ceiling fans are found in nearly every room in the house. A second fan by Emerson is in the dining room, although Mr. Cross says some buyers have opted to place a light fixture there instead.

Of the home's three bathrooms, the powder room below is the showpiece. Outfitted — as the others are — with fixtures by Kohler, it boasts a pedestal sink and a standing shower.

"Because of its location next to the study, it could easily become a guest room," Mr. Cross said, pointing to a closet which lines a tiny corridor between the two rooms as a means of underscoring the possibility.

"The pedestal sink is in vogue now and so we put it in this room, because it has a lot of visibility. We really wanted it to feel almost more like a powder room than a guest room. This gives it more of that feel."

The three bedrooms are all on the upper floor of the house. They're tiled in a style Florida Tile describes as 'whitewashed', that is from the



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