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Suburban SURPRISES

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that *defy*
expectations

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Westward Expansion

A NEW DEVELOPMENT IN SHORT PUMP PROMISES TO PUT THE URBAN IN SUBURBAN. By *Jessica Ronky Haddad*



Architect Burt Pinnock of Baskervill at GreenGate

You can't get much more suburban than Short Pump. But Markel | Eagle, the developer behind the area's newest mixed-use development, GreenGate, promises to "put the urban in suburban" with this latest addition to West Broad Street.

Featuring 200 single-family homes and 50 townhomes on 75 acres, GreenGate also will include two office buildings and seven commercial buildings housing outposts of popular city restaurants The Daily Kitchen & Bar and Mellow Mushroom, local retailers and more.

The area is envisioned as a slice of downtown Richmond transported to Henrico County, complete with a street art project helmed by artist and muralist Ed Trask.

Richmond-based architecture firm Baskervill designed the site's commercial buildings, drawing on architectural details inspired by Richmond's history and authentic style.

We talked to lead architect Burt Pinnock about the challenges of creating a walkable, urban community in the 'burbs.

INTERVIEW

R•HOME: What is the greatest challenge of 'putting the urban in suburban' without it becoming a cliché?

Burt Pinnock: The challenge is identifying the big and successful design ideas in [urban] planning and architecture that you want to stick to, and choosing things that are time-tested, things people recognize as truly part of our region and city. Trying to identify all of those things and put them together in a way that doesn't seem forced, in a way that will allow them to develop over time. Talk to me again in 10 years, and we'll see if it worked.

R•HOME: How do you convey that through architecture?

Pinnock: We have the greatest pattern book on the East Coast at our disposal: Richmond itself. We approached the project internally at Baskervill as a design team; it was not just me. We have seven buildings, so I [needed] six designers to sit down with me, to each go at it and take a building. ... We all had to understand the design principles, decide on a palette of materials, and then let everyone go off on their own. With a design team approach, it lets us end up with seven distinct, compatible and relatable buildings.

With our office being in Shockoe Bottom just east of 14th Street, it was very easy to get out and look around Shockoe Slip and Shockoe Bottom. We certainly looked at Carytown, one of the most

vibrant historic retail corridors around. One building is influenced by Cary Court. Other buildings were influenced by older warehouse buildings. There is a mix of things.

R•HOME: What, to you, are the biggest flaws in similar suburban developments?

Pinnock: Streets that lead to nowhere, if you will, that just dead-end. There has to be thought about the holistic [street] network to force people to navigate through, and thus experience [the development] and populate it. I don't think people are always looking at that from the beginning. ... Also, the types of businesses they are putting there ... are places people definitely want to go to. I think they have the long view in mind.

R•HOME: What are some of your favorite features of the development?

Pinnock: One of my favorite things was the design approach and working with six other designers in doing this. My favorite building ... has an Iron Front kind of feel to it and was inspired by the Iron Fronts on Main Street.

Last but not least, the client [Markel | Eagle,] especially [Principal] J.B. Gurley, is a favorite thing. Their intent is in the right place, and everyone is passionate about getting this right. We are trying to stay on top of every little detail.

R•HOME: What will surprise people the most about GreenGate?

Pinnock: I hope that it feels like a little neighborhood as soon as you enter, that it doesn't feel like you are entering a retail center or an office park. We want it to feel like you have entered something that is a little bit different, and a little bit special.

GreenGate features seven architecturally distinct commercial buildings.

