



real estate guide

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BY GREG CORRADINI

Uptown may already possess an abundance of stylish and artistic people, but now it's got an equally stylish place to house them.

Lander Sherman, a Lander Group and Sherman Associates development partnership, will soon complete the Midtown Lofts at 2829 Colfax Ave. S.

Midtown Lofts' 72 units — a combination of townhomes, one- and two-level flats — should be completed by May. However, at press time, only nine units were available, according to Lander Group Marketing Director Wren Aigaki-Lander (daughter of company founder Michael Lander).

While many worry a condo-glut in Minneapolis will result in vacant units — not a nearly sold out before opening day? In addition to the convenience and cool-factor of living in Uptown, not to mention the hopes of someday making a mint on a resell, these lofts are a striking neighborhood addition, inside and out.

THE BASICS

Midtown Lofts is comprised of three buildings: two four-stories that face the Midtown Greenway and a two-and-a-half and three story row of townhomes just to their north. The 56 units available in the south or greenway-facing buildings are one- or two-levels and start at \$299,900. The 16 two-and-a-half-story townhomes begin at \$419,000. The units vary widely in size, from roughly 750 to 1,750 square feet.

Although a residents association is yet to be formed (since most people haven't moved in yet), Aigaki-Lander expects the residents-group-to-be will set association fees at 18-20 cents per square-foot monthly (approximately \$570 for a \$300,000 unit). Association dues will go towards such upkeep basics as snow removal, as well as amenities.

One such amenity is the common courtyard. Aigaki-Lander expects the landscaped garden area, complete with a fountain, to be finished in May. Additionally, each resident owns his or her own underground parking stall (an additional stall costs \$19,000).



The three-story north building offers eight townhomes and eight one- or two-level flats.

PHOTOS BY GREG CORRADINI

A SNEAK PEEK INSIDE MIDTOWN LOFTS

A Southwest home for urban hipsters right along the Greenway



A townhome's contemporary finished kitchen with Birch cabinets and gas stove.

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No more cookie-cutter looks — go 'traditional,' 'loft' or mix and match

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'IT' FACTOR

To be blunt, Midtown Lofts' artful design makes some nearby "modern" developments look like oatmeal and cinderblock cubes.

In addition to varying in height, the exteriors of the three Lofts buildings are a veritable patchwork of colors and materials. Yellow stucco, red brick, galvanized metal and "Hardiplank," a durable material that compensates for wood siding and trim, combine to form a sort of giant collage.

Aigaki-Lander said adding such texture to the traditional neighborhood mix is important to the developers. "I think that [texture] is probably one of the strengths of this type of design," she said.

On the inside, residents can select either a "traditional" or "loft" floor plan — "loft" meaning less separation between the bedroom and main living area than normal — and a "traditional" or "contemporary" interior finish.

Aigaki-Lander said a buyer attracted to the classic bulb-shaped doorknob would best stick to the traditional finish. They may not appreciate the sleek, handle-like "knobs" of the contemporary finish.

This differences goes deeper than doorknobs. Significant traditional finish options include hardwood (cherry) cabinets, kitchen islands, hardwood floors, tiled bathroom floors and carpet. Because of the cost associated with these finishes, opting for the traditional finish is going to be pricier.

Contemporary finish can mean sealed-concrete and/or high-gloss, birch plywood floors. Ductwork remains exposed, to give that semi-industrial/warehouse-like feel.

While concrete flooring may sound clunky and cold, Aigaki-Lander pointed out how the contemporary style lends a lighter, airy feel that seems to expand the space. While touring one home, she pointed to a stairwell "wall" made of wood slats, as opposed to drywall, that allowed light to filter through.

Whether traditional or contemporary, each unit has plenty of windows. "The concept is to let the light in," Aigaki-Lander said. "And really try to keep the space open even though you are keeping a separation between living spaces."

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY DESIGN

Aigaki-Lander said the developers also incorporated a few environment-friendly designs in Midtown Lofts for responsible buyers.

Interface Flor's recycled-carpet squares change carpet-cleaning-as-we-know-it, for example. "If you spill on them," Aigaki-Lander said. "You can just pick them up and wash them and throw them back down."

Such options might be a sign of things to come for future Lander developments.



(Left) This townhome's second-story room can function as a bedroom or alternative living room.

PHOTOS BY
GREG CORRADINI



One Midtown Loft unit, the "green unit," serves as a demonstration home for the Lander Group's enviro-friendly research and development arm, Lander Green.

The green unit features recycled rubber floors, recycled-content sheetrock and cabinetry with formaldehyde-free veneer among other earth-friendly touches. Aigaki-Lander said it features water-conserving or low-flow appliances as well, such as dual-flush toilets. "That's sort of the 'next thing' in environmental bathrooms," she said. "Yep, it's got a full-flush and a half-flush, depending on your need."

Whether the half-flush will fly with consumers remains to be seen.

However, residents and neighbors of the swank new development can bank on more condos coming to their area.

Midtown Lofts is the first phase of the 192-unit Urban Village project — meaning 122 additional condos, duplexes and townhomes — between Aldrich and Dupont avenues along this stretch of railway-turned-bikeway.

For more information, visit themidtownlofts.com.



(Left) A long view of a townhome's contemporary finished kitchen with concrete floors.

(Below) The exterior of all Midtown Lofts' buildings are constructed with stucco, brick and metal.

