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# Phase III of Icehouse beginning



By Erin Arvedlund, Inquirer Staff Writer

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Nearly a decade after he started the project, James Maransky has finally finished the second phase of the Icehouse, his 36-unit condominium development at Thompson Street and Columbia Avenue in Fishtown.

EnVision Group, his company, now will break ground on a third phase. One block over from the Icehouse on Columbia, it is developing Moyer Street Court townhouses.

Maransky, founder of EnVision and a green-roof professional who specializes in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified construction, said many of his colleagues in the industry did not make it through the financial crisis.

He knows how hard it was - and almost had to stop work himself. The Icehouse's second phase was on ice, figuratively, during the financial meltdown as banks backed away from new projects. But, Maransky said recently as he looked out on the project's common green-roof area, "I was so confident that once the first phase was finished, the second phase would sell out - and it did."

Units in Phase II went for prices ranging from \$225,000 to \$425,000, and once the market recovered, "bidding wars started breaking out," he said.

In total, the three phases represent a \$7 million investment and, he estimated, 32,000 square feet of living area. The architect was Judy Robinson, of Continuum Architecture. Maransky hired local artists such as Joel Erland for the concrete sinks and counters and Pappajohn Woodworking for the 8-foot mahogany doors in each unit.

The Icehouse features a koi pond fed by 750-gallon water tanks; rainwater irrigates the green roofs. These are LEED-certified buildings constructed on what had at one time been about 15 different parcels, some abandoned properties, and the site of an old garage.

Units are affordable enough, Maransky said, that "young professionals can move in and own for what they'd be paying in rent" for 1,000 square feet.

Five of Phase III's 13 units are under contract, he said, and every unit has parking space.

Phase III will overlook nearby Hetzel Ball Field, a city park, and for each unit sold, Maransky said, \$500 is being donated to maintain it.

"So far, we've raised \$10,000 for the park," he added.

Because the neighborhood residents tired of four-legged creatures using Hetzel's field as a bathroom, dogs are no longer allowed in the area. So Maransky built a dog park on the roof of his building for residents who had animals and wanted some emergency greenery.

"I'm a dog lover, so I had to do that," he said. He also created common areas to socialize, such as a rooftop deck and barbecue with a full outdoor kitchen.

In its first phase in 2009, the Icehouse received a green-roof tax credit, among the first to be awarded in Philadelphia.

Maransky has created green roofs for other developments, too, such as Leo Addimando's Wharton Street Lofts in Southwest Center City.

"Jim Maransky is a green-building visionary," Addimando said. "His design and execution of the green roof, deck and stormwater-management infrastructure at our Wharton Street Lofts project was flawless."

Maransky said he likes developing in Fishtown because "it sits on a twisted grid, unlike Northern Liberties, which has avenues of high

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traffic." (At rush hour one recent weekday, there were few cars driving along the neighborhood's streets.)

Not far away, at 412-424 Moyer Street Court, Maransky will build 11 three-story townhouses with individual garages and green roofs.

Prices will start in the high \$400,000s; two units are currently under agreement.

That \$3 million-to-\$4 million project should break ground early next year, with completion expected in fall 2015. Bucks County Bank and Meridian Bank are providing financing.

"These are single-family homes, and there won't be a condo fee," Maransky said.

The units range in size from 2,030 to 2,630 square feet, with private garages inside an inner courtyard.

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