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## Construction Anticipated on River Landing's First Residences

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David Clappier, Pete Lakakis, Otis Johnson and Ron Stevens get things off the ground

City of Savannah officials teamed up with private developers Thursday morning for a groundbreaking that signals the real launch of the Savannah River Landing.

This groundbreaking was the city's event, launching the multi-million extension of the riverwalk along Savannah's waterfront from its current end past the Savannah Riverfront Marriott and on eastward to become a major part of the new luxury development. But the private developers were on hand too, with an eye toward the launch of vertical construction and the beginning of active sales.

Vertical construction is the actual buildings themselves. So far, the work that has gone into the 54-acre site has been infrastructure - utilities, roadwork, curbing,

Ambling Land & Resort and Ambling Development Partners, the development firms behind the Savannah River Landing, were to launch residential sales of the first phase of 21 "city homes" the weekend of January 12 and 13, according to spokesman Bryan Harris.

At starting prices of \$1.4 million, sales in that first phase should be a good litmus test of how deep the real estate slowdown is in Savannah. In that price range, potential buyers should be well removed from the sub-prime mortgage meltdown. These are likely to be second (or third) homes, meaning many buyers don't face the prospect of selling a primary residence before they can buy in. Those can't-sell-a-home-elsewhere blues are cited by local Realtors as a factor in slow sales here.

Start looking for the carefully stage-managed release of information on other aspects of the Savannah River Landings, like the flags for the project's two anticipated hotels and tenants for the retail portion of what is billed as an extension of downtown's historic sector.

Ambling has announced the lineup of local builders involved, all major players in higher-end construction and design. Architects from other areas are also involved to ensure architectural diversity.

The participating Savannah companies are J.T. Turner Construction, a contractor; GreenLine Architecture, which will handle interior design; and Dawson Wissmach, a Savannah architectural firm. Other architects are Summerour and Associates Inc., an Atlanta-based firm with studios in St. Simons Island and elsewhere, and Historical Concepts, a firm based in Peachtree City outside Atlanta.

What is a "city home," anyway? Folks behind the development have coined the term, and it seems to fall somewhere between townhome and row house. The attached row houses will be ranked around a series of squares which mimic Savannah's original plan and its existing squares. The homes will be three or four stories high, with detached carriage houses at the rear - again, mirroring historic Savannah style. They will range from 2,200 square feet to more than 5,100 square feet. At build out, plans call for there to be 100 such residences. These are not condos, which figure elsewhere in the mixed-use project.

"The city homes will offer the best of intown living in Savannah. They will have the historic look and feel with the conveniences and upgrades of modern construction," said David Clappier, project executive for Savannah River Landing and vice president for Ambling Companies, Inc., in a prepared statement in advance of Thursday's festivities.

J. T. Turner's most recent work includes custom homes in Palmetto Bluff and the Ford Plantation as well as historic homes throughout Savannah. The company is also involved in building luxury homes on Hutchinson Island, the other luxury waterfront development set to capitalize on its Savannah River setting. The builder has received multiple awards during its 31-year history from the Historic Savannah Foundation and the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation Inc. CEO and founder Jim Turner sits on the Historic Savannah Foundation board.

GreenLine Architecture, a Savannah architecture and design firm, will select interior design details and finishes. The interior design team will assist the "city home" buyers in personalizing the interior details. Each buyer will have a four-hour consultation with an interior designer as part of the purchase price.

GreenLine has created three tailored packages to allow buyers to easily personalize their new homes. The "traditional," "transitional" or "contemporary" packages offer a variety of options for such features as flooring, cabinetry, appliances, lighting, and hardware.

Ambling Companies, Inc. is made up of six affiliates, including the two of which are involved in the Savannah River Landing project. It is headquartered in Valdosta.

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