

YOUR FIRST HOME STARTS WITH FIRST PLACE

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Sustainable living, modern style



Design of new homes was finalized with community input

Five year deferral on the land costs of the mortgage



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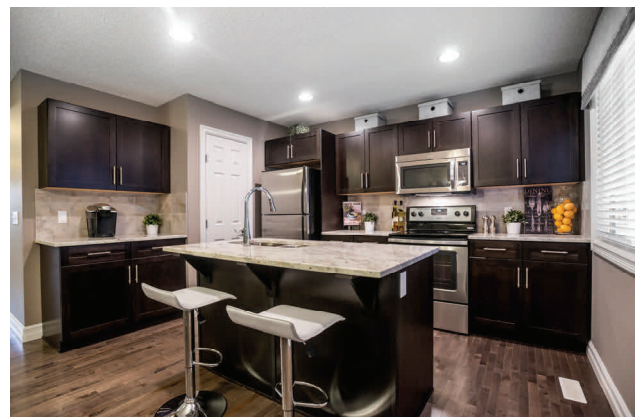


The latest showhome at **Caernarvon Keep (14621-121 Street NW)** is a three-bedroom townhome with two full baths upstairs and a half bath in the main living area. A master bedroom with a private ensuite provides privacy and space. The large windows let natural light enter the living space. The uninterrupted floor space allows guests to mingle from the dining and living room to the kitchen area freely.



First Place homes in Caernarvon Keep have a federal EnerGuide rating of 83 to 86 and feature:

- 96 per cent energy-efficient furnaces,
- Tankless hot water,
- Spray foam insulation,
- Triple pane windows,
- Drain water heat recovery and more.



“Young buyers may not always see energy efficiency as an affordable option, but with these First Place homes it’s built right in,” says Tim McCargar , Director, Corporate Properties Branch.

Sustainable and stylish: First Place homes cut energy bills

February 4, 2014

High eco-efficiency and lower energy bills are part of the package for the City of Edmonton's First Place homes in Caernarvon neighbourhood.

The new townhomes aimed at first-time buyers have a federal [EnerGuide](#) rating averaging 84. That's just one step below the top category of energy-efficient housing. There can be real benefits for homeowners, according to Edmonton's [Green Home Guide](#). Annual energy costs for a typical 1,500 square foot house built in 2011 with an EnerGuide rating of 71 is about \$1,500, compared to \$900 for a home with a rating of 80.

"It adds up to great news for young families buying their first home in Edmonton," says Tim McCargar, Director, Corporate Properties Branch and project leader for housing development on some of the City's [surplus school sites](#). "Young buyers may not always see energy efficiency as an affordable option, but with these [First Place](#) homes it's built right in."

Built by Landmark Group, the homes qualified for grants of between \$1,000 and \$7,000 per unit as part of a City of Edmonton pilot program for First Place homes that achieve higher EnerGuide ratings. Homeowners benefit from lower utility bills thanks to 96% energy-efficient furnaces, tankless hot water, spray foam insulation, triple pane windows, drain water heat recovery and more. The City is testing grant programs like this to assess their effectiveness at improving energy efficiency in the residential home market and reducing Edmonton's overall carbon footprint.

First Place homes are also part of a City of Edmonton strategy to use available land for housing that will attract and retain young skilled people within the community. Caernarvon Keep is the third site being developed, with another nearing completion in Tawa, and all units are selling quickly. A showhome at Caernarvon Keep Phase 1 is open Monday to Thursday, 3 to 8 p.m. for anyone wishing to check out the First Place program firsthand.

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First Place provides first place to call home

After an educational journey involving several countries and provinces in recent years, Janna Plewes is excited about making her home in one of Edmonton's First Place developments.

She's one of the early buyers for First Place homes in the Caernarvon neighbourhood, where units will be approaching completion in November 2013.

"I came to Edmonton to work with the City in February 2012 and am very happy with my job," says the 30-something social worker. "I plan to be here for a while, and the opportunity to buy my first home was very appealing to me."

First Place homes sell at market rates, but portions of the mortgage related to the land cost are deferred for five years, providing an attractive level of affordability. Owners cannot rent out the property for the period of the deferral, and a condo board ensures exterior maintenance is top-notch.

"That was another bonus," says Janna. "The condo fees are less than half what I saw in other developments."

She also likes the design of the project, built on a vacant school site declared surplus to school board needs. "I like how First Place homes improve community life in general, and especially neat to have community input into the design of the project. That's fantastic, and something the typical development doesn't involve."



Janna is gearing up to enjoy her active lifestyle to her new home

Janna worked with the builder to choose interior colours and upgrades that would really make it her own home, and she can't wait for moving day.

"You are really building your future and your life with a home like this," she says. "I have led a rather nomadic life while working across Canada and internationally and completing my Master's, and



it's a big deal to settle down for five years. But this program is set up for young professionals who want to settle in Edmonton, and it seems geared for me. It's a good fit for me and where I'm at in my life right now."

Janna will revert to the full mortgage obligation in five years, when she expects to have savings and an income situation that will help her manage the transition. In the meantime she likes the comfort of a new-home warranty on the three bedroom, two-and-a-half bath home, the expectation of a nine-minute commute to downtown Edmonton, and the pleasure of being able to keep her kayak and

bicycle with her, rather than parking them at friends' places.

More bonuses: Janna will qualify for financial incentives for her energy-efficient appliances, and she'll be living in a project built by Landmark Homes, a construction company with a "green" reputation for its construction methods and materials.

For more information on Caernarvon's First Place homes, and other First Place projects planned for Edmonton, visit edmonton.ca/surplusschools.



First Place homes on a pilot surplus school site in Greenview sold out immediately



First Place a perfect fit for young family

Kristi and Devon Rundvall saw First Place homes in Canon Ridge as a perfect fit for themselves and their three children.

After four years of renting in Edmonton's west end, they joined a group of people who made the Canon Ridge development in the northeast Hermitage area an instant sell-out.

Today Kristi chairs the condo board that takes care of exterior upkeep and management of the 42 units.

"We were searching for a house and constantly on the internet," Kristi recalls. "We saw this First Place development in Canon Ridge and wondered why on earth it was such a good price and so affordable. We attended an open house and fell in love with the place."

First Place homes sell at market rates, but portions of the mortgage related to the land cost are deferred for five years, providing an attractive level of affordability. Owners cannot rent out the property for the period of the deferral, and the condo board ensures exterior maintenance is top-notch.

"The deferral of a portion of the mortgage was very attractive," says Kristi. "And after that period, it's arranged so that the payments actually remain the same. We estimated it saves us seven or eight thousand dollars on the cost of the house."

The Rundvall's three-bedroom house consists of 1100 square feet on two floors, plus a basement that's now finished. Canon Ridge is built on a vacant school site declared surplus to school board needs, and the adjacent park space opens right off the family's back deck.

"We don't have a back yard as such, but the whole park



New home was love at first sight for the Rundvall family

area is right there," says Kristi.

She likes the community too. "Canon Ridge and Hermitage are awesome," she says. "We have everything we need, with schools and city parks across the road and behind our development."

Canon Ridge residents are planning get-togethers including a block party, and are also active in broader community meetings and events in the Hermitage area.



Owners can leave before the five years is up, transferring the deferral to the new owner. About half the original Canon Ridge owners have stayed, with the remainder moving on because of changing life circumstances or the need for a bigger place.

“I think we are here for the five years at least,” says

Kristi. “It would have taken us longer to get into a house without the First Place program, and for the moment at least, it’s home.”

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First Place homes on a pilot surplus school site in Greenview sold out immediately