

Trinity Bluff developer breaks ground on condos

BY BETTY DILLARD

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Villa de Leon photo by Jon P. Uzzel View looking East from Trinity River

Villa de Leon, the first luxury condominium development along historic Samuels Avenue overlooking the Trinity River in Uptown Fort Worth, is under construction.

The 23-unit complex is what developers Tom Struhs and his wife Elizabeth Falconer call the “crown jewel” of their 30-acre Trinity Bluff development, an estimated \$350 million, mixed-use project on an 80-foot bluff that overlooks downtown.

Three blocks from the courthouse and within walking distance of Sundance Square, the Trinity Bluff project is part of the developers’ vision to revitalize what was the city’s first neighborhood, which dates to the founding of Fort Worth in 1849.

The couple, longtime area luxury builders, has been buying property in the Samuels Avenue neighborhood for more than a decade.

“We started in 1996 with our first assemblage and we bought our last piece of property last week,” Struhs told a group gathered at the Associated Businesses of the Cultural District’s monthly meeting on April 15.

Scheduled for completion in 2009, the six-story Villa de Leon is being designed by Fort Worth architect Ames Fender. Thos. S. Byrne of Fort Worth is the general contractor.

CondoSmart Realty, sales representative for the T&P Lofts downtown, is handling sales for Villa de Leon. District Sales Manager Mary Margaret Davis is joined by Howard Jenkins, who is on

site at the Samuels Avenue presentation center.

Struhs said the residences are named for Alonzo de Leon, who discovered and named the Trinity River in 1690.

“When we were doing this on Fort Worth’s bluff, we wanted to respect the history, in fact, we wanted to respect the bluff,” he said. “We’ve provided an easement with the city because it is our

intention – and Fort Worth’s – to provide access to the river and to the neighborhood.”

The 23 high-end custom units will feature two and three bedrooms, gourmet kitchens, spa baths and sweeping views of the river and downtown. Other amenities will include underground parking, 24-hour concierge service, terraces, gardens and a pool and spa.

Residences average 2,700 square feet and sales prices start at \$412 per square foot. According to Struhs, four of the units have already been sold.

“This is something that has not been built downtown,” said Struhs. “What we’ve already accomplished, or will accomplish in the future, is 3,500 people living here in a concentrated downtown neighborhood. We want people to enjoy the spirit of community in living downtown.”

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