



JAKE FRY (left), DIANE DELVES (above)

## JAKE FRY No small influence

While the concept of laneway housing implies a small space, there is nothing small about Jake Fry's influence on this new housing form. "Laneway homes are a new form of urban infill housing that I'd been advocating for several years," says Fry, president of Smallworks. "It's a whole new sub-set of the housing market that is finding its feet in one of the world's most expensive housing markets."

For his company, he says 2010 began "with a sprint off the blocks for our little company, with a full order book and a last-minute request from the City of Vancouver and Simon Fraser University to build one of our standard laneway homes for the Vancouver Olympic Pavilion. We also started building our first cohort of flat-pac, energy-efficient laneway homes."

Smallworks built more than a dozen of these attractive and functional homes, and more projects are in the pipes for 2011, including a new garden cottage at three quarters of the living size and half the price of laneway housing.

Fry participates regularly in community events, and works with municipal agencies to help educate stakeholders in the advantages of laneway housing. "Our messages focus on the benefits to families

and how laneway housing provides the best way to maintaining a neighbourhood feel to a city in the midst of a significant growth cycle," he explains.

"A common complaint often heard is that young Vancouverites are no longer able to afford to own a house in the same neighbourhood they grew up in. At the same time, the aging population is faced with the option of cashing out on their high-priced equity and either moving farther away or to a smaller rental unit. What both these parties are often interested in is retaining quality of life for each. In this respect, the laneway house has proven to be able to provide this environment."

## DIANE DELVES Quantum leap

As president and CEO of Quantum Properties, Diane Delves is one of only a few women at the helm of a development company, but her gender has nothing to do with her success. She has previously stated that, "I don't feel like a 'woman' in the development industry. I feel like a 'developer' in the development industry." Through Quantum, she is moving Abbotsford — what was once a rural community — forward into a community that is welcoming many new residents into its multi-family and high-rise projects.

"A notable achievement this past year was receiving rezoning approval for our Abbotsford high-rise project, Mahogany at Mill Lake. The tower portion of this two-phase project [low-rise second phase] will not only be the highest building in Abbotsford, but will also be the tallest building between Surrey and Calgary," she says.

"Another achievement this past year was taking over a condominium project, Brooklyn, which had been started in the summer of 2008 [in Abbotsford] and stalled with the downturn in the market. I partnered with the original owners and restarted construction the summer of 2010. This project will complete later this year."

But she points out that it's important for developers like her to understand the current market. "The biggest challenge we face is coming to terms with the new reality in terms of absorption. The days of projects selling out at launch will be rare events in the near future. Longer absorption periods require that we adjust our financing and marketing expectations," she says. "[We need] to focus on providing quality housing, pay close attention to our market area and understand the needs of future buyers."

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