

DO IT YOURSELF

Installing your own doors opens a can of worms

MIKE HOLMES
MAKE IT RIGHT

Installing a door is not an open-and-shut job. It's sure not as simple as it may seem at first glance. In fact, a lot of homeowners think hanging a new door is easy until it's too late and they find themselves stuck with an unworkable opening.

The two most obvious things to keep in mind are the door itself and the existing frame. There are a lot of different choices for doors. Steel, fibre-

glass composite and wood are the most common choices for exterior doors. And, as with most things in the house, you usually get what you pay for. The better the door, the stronger the construction and the greater the insulating value. That means you could be more secure and your heating and cooling efforts won't go out, well, the door. For the same reasons, you want a professional to install your exterior door.

For interior doors, homeowners are more inclined to try to do it themselves. That's usually a mistake.

Wood doors are the most common interior choice in a residential application – unless it's the door between the house and an attached garage.

That door should be fire-rated, close automatically and have proper weather-stripping to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the house.

With wood doors there's a variety of prices and choices. Hollow-core wood frame doors are the most common and the most affordable. It's the fact that they are mostly hollow that makes them affordable. There are also solid wood doors, although they aren't necessarily better. It depends on the type of wood used and how it was constructed. A poorly built solid wood door will warp and never close properly. It may swell and shrink depending on the humidity in the house, making it hard to open or close.

But the biggest challenge to

opening or closing a door is how it is fit into the opening or frame. And yes, this is a finicky job that can challenge the skill – and patience – of even a seasoned carpenter.

Most often, the door frame or jamb is out of square – especially in older homes – in at least one dimension, either side to side, from top to bottom or from top corner to the opposite bottom corner.

If you follow inside walls that are out of plumb and the new door is hung in the old frame, the door may not open or close properly. That's one reason why most new doors are sold with their own jamb (or, in contractor language, are “pre-hung”).

If your door is not prehung consider changing the jamb.

It's unlikely the new door will fit the existing jamb without modifications. Besides, it's always a good idea to look behind the existing jamb; it's a chance to see whether the rough framing was done right, and also whether there are any surprises lurking behind there.

In the past, I've found plumbing lines or electrical wires running in the void between the rough opening and the existing jamb just waiting for a puncture from a trim nail. I've even found clear evidence that the structure of the house was tampered with.

If the existing jamb can't be altered, all is not lost; shaping a solid wood door to the opening is usually straightforward. A pencil, a plane and lots of experience will get the job

done. A hollow-core door is a different animal: the bottom rail or side stiles usually have to be removed – with a lot of trouble – so the door can be cut to size. Then, it has to be reassembled.

Thinking of installing a new door? Think twice, and don't underestimate the challenge. A professional has the proper tools to do the job right.

Not many homeowners have either the experience to hang a door or the specialized tools needed to line up and miter the hinge openings or drill the holes for the lockset. Some doors are best left closed.

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DONE DEAL » VANCOUVER ISLAND

WOLF ISLAND

ASKING PRICE: \$8,000,000

SELLING PRICE: \$7,000,000

TAXES: \$11,421 (2007)

DAYS ON MARKET: 122

LISTING AGENT: Peter Nash, Newport Realty

BUYER'S AGENT: Irv Ridd, Cascadia Pacific Realty

BY THOMASINA BARNES

It was with great reluctance that the previous owners of this 22-acre private island left their 4,032-square-foot home for relocation in Florida, says agent Peter Nash.

But it was love at first sight for the new owners, says agent Irv Ridd.

“The purchaser viewed over 14 oceanfront and island properties between the Lower Gulf Islands to the Campbell River/Quadra Island area.

“When we showed him Wolf Island, he dropped all interest in the other property offerings

and focused on acquiring it,” Mr. Ridd says.

Wolf Island is in Becher Bay, about 32 kilometres west of Victoria, with underwater sewage, hydro and telephone service from Vancouver Island.

The five-bedroom home was built in 2006 with vaulted ceilings and floor-to-ceiling picture windows. “The property views out over the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Olympic Peninsula in Washington state,” says Mr. Ridd.

The property also has a double car garage with workshop loft and a 586-square-foot caretaker or guest cottage with water views, sited away from the main residence to ensure complete privacy – a highly regarded asset for both the previous owner and new purchaser.

“This is an extremely private yet readily accessible new home with marvellous views and a fantastic ocean environment,” says Mr. Ridd.

Other features include an all-weather, all-tide dock and launch ramp, sandy shell beaches, lighted roadway and many trails.

The island is an idyllic spot with abundant marine and



bird life, says Mr. Nash. The new owners can enjoy fresh salmon, rockfish, clams, mussels, oysters and crab from their private dock while watching the eagles overhead.

“Until the sellers purchased the island in 2004 there had never been any development on it, and many people

thought it was a park,” says Mr. Nash.

“The buyer is ‘offshore’ and will access Wolf Island by either flying to Vancouver or Victoria in his private jet and chartering a sea plane to the island, visiting whenever possible for a little R&R,” Mr. Ridd says.

DONE DEAL » KITSILANO

2828 YEW ST., UNIT 107

ASKING PRICE: \$725,000

SELLING PRICE: \$719,000

TAXES: \$2,994 (2007)

PREVIOUS SELLING PRICE: \$499,900 (2005)

DAYS ON MARKET: 17

LISTING AGENT: Faith Wilson, Re/Max

BY THOMASINA BARNES

This new 1,158-square-foot condo in the heart of Kitsilano with two bedrooms, two bathrooms and an open floor plan is perfect for family living, says agent Faith Wilson.

“The Kitsilano neighbourhood is very popular with young families due to its proximity to the Kitsilano Community Centre, beaches, schools, grocery stores and Fourth Avenue’s “baby block” of shops geared to infants, says Ms. Wilson.

“This beautiful condo was a great place for the previous owner to start their family. As



their family grew they needed to find more space and the home was sold to another couple who is starting their family.”

Built in 2006, the suite has stainless steel appliances, a generous patio and a five-piece master ensuite bathroom with a walk-in shower and double sink.

The suite has nine-foot ceilings, granite countertops and cherry hardwood floors in the principal rooms. There are two covered parking stalls and a storage locker. The unit is pet friendly and south facing.

ON SITE » YALETOWN

Project follows famed planner's rulebook

BY THOMASINA BARNES

Amacon will pay homage to former Vancouver city planner Larry Beasley with its latest Yaletown development.

The developers hope that the project will incorporate all of Mr. Beasley's principles for urban development, which include mixed use, social diversity, heritage preservation, walkability, green construction and quality design.

“The project was named the Beasley as a tribute to the excellence in planning principles that governed the development of downtown Vancouver over the past 20 years under co-director of planning Larry Beasley,” says Richard Wittstock, the vice-president of development for the Beasley.

“This project encompasses many of the planning principles that he promoted which caused Vancouver to be recognized as a world leader. It is a true tribute to urban excellence,” he says.

Amacon hopes the \$150-million, 200-unit, 33-storey condo tower will become an instant icon by combining heritage with contemporary design.

The current 1913 Edwardian apartment and retail building at the corner of Homer and Smithe streets will be preserved and a modern glass tower will be added atop the heritage site.

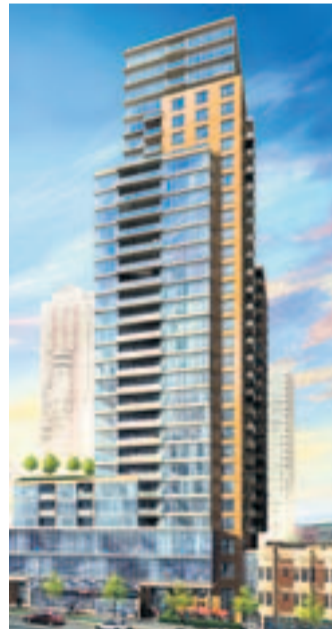
In an interview Mr. Beasley approved of his namesake development.

“The quality you see in the Beasley and throughout Yaletown/Downtown South has made high-density, inner-city living in Vancouver socially acceptable, even chic,” he says.

“If a new development can save old heritage, it is a very good thing. Every site has a history, and to carry that heritage into a future development is magical,” says Mr. Beasley.

The project will also preserve and modernize an adjacent 1970s-era office building, with the addition of a green roof to provide an attractive overlook for the condominium residents.

The development will cater to an urban lifestyle with an eighth-floor dog run, a state-of-the-art fitness facility and direct access to Library Square, Robson Street and Yaletown



THE BEASLEY

DEVELOPER: Amacon

PRICE: Starting from the mid \$400,000s

SIZE: 550 sq. ft. to 1,300 sq. ft.

SALES CENTRE: 1035 Seymour Street, Vancouver

CONTACT: www.thebeasley.com

along with 7,000 square feet of retail space downstairs.

“While it is a high-rise development, the scale of the ground floor retail and the heritage revitalization of the Homer Block helps the project feel quite intimate to pedestrians at the ground floor,” says Mr. Wittstock.

The suites at the Beasley were designed by Insight Design Group Inc. to reflect the sleek modern lifestyle associated with a Yaletown address.

“We always felt that people would be drawn to the project first and foremost because of the location,” says Mr. Wittstock. “Keeping the homeowner in mind, we endeavoured to design suites that are more spacious than the majority of other high-rise accommodation in the area.”

The suites have eight-foot ceilings, engineered hardwood flooring and stone countertops, stainless steel KitchenAid Architect Series II appliances, square soaker bathtubs and custom made cabinetry.



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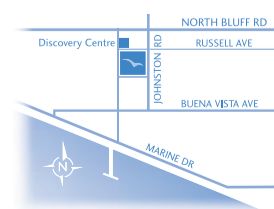
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