

Life in the city

# real estate

## Welcome to Mr. Lander's neighborhood

**Printer's Row is latest chapter in developer's multistoried creation of St. Paul's newest neighborhood**

FRANK JOSSI

Seven years ago, developer Michael Lander drove by an aging six-story warehouse for sale in a downtown St. Paul neighborhood known to city planners as the Northeast Quadrant. Despite the surrounding landscape of surface parking lots and largely empty warehouses, Lander saw the potential for a new residential neighborhood.

He wasn't the first. The city of St. Paul's Department of Planning and Economic Department, Lander discovered, already had a blueprint for the Northeast Quadrant calling for a new park, dense warehouse-style housing and street-level businesses similar to Lowertown just a few blocks away.

Lander liked what he saw. After gaining the development rights for several parcels in the Northeast Quadrant, he went to work five years ago building St. Paul's newest neighborhood, an appealing mixture of townhouses, tony condominiums and apartments comprising 460 units with more to come.

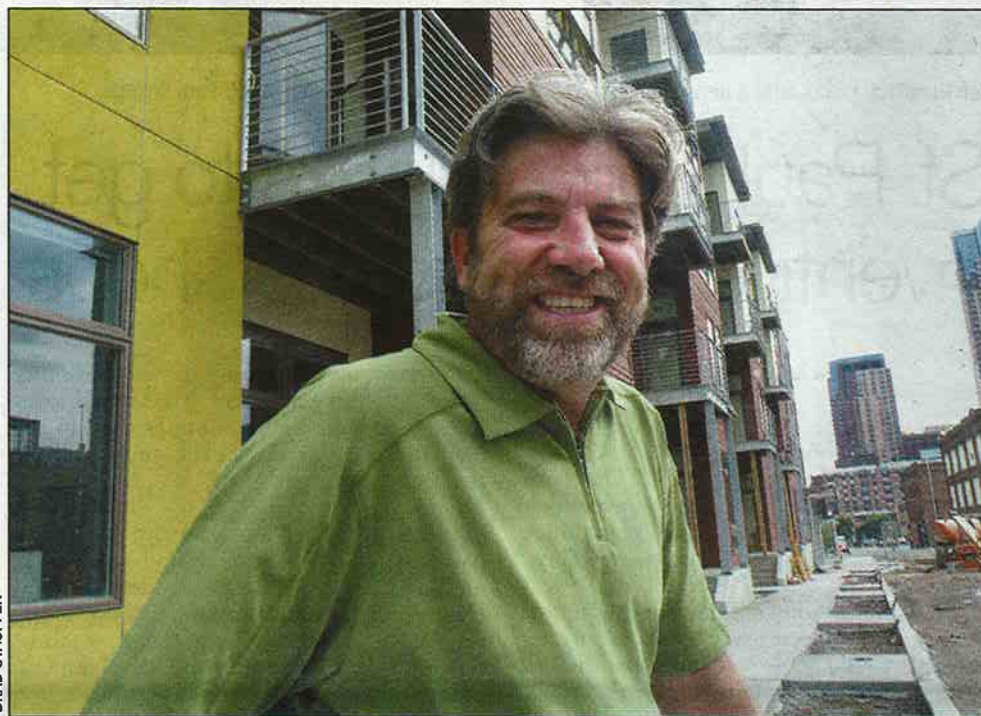
The six-block area that stretches from East 7th to East 10th streets and from Temperance to Wacouta streets even has a new moniker: Wacouta Commons, a name derived from the new city park on 9th Street that will formally open with a ribbon cutting in mid-September.

Wacouta Commons is the largest project Lander, president of the Minneapolis-based Lander Group, has ever completed. It has been recognized locally and nationally for its clean, modern design and appealing streetscapes. Also part of the development team are George Sherman, well known for transforming risky urban properties into vibrant neighborhoods, and Minneapolis-based ESG Architects.

Lander's handiwork can be found across the Twin Cities, from a small multi-unit development on Summit Avenue and Grotto Street to a sleek new tower high above the Walker Art Center's Sculpture Garden. Elsewhere in St. Paul, he is working on a high-rise condo on the West Side Flats and Market Square, a residential development in Lowertown featuring an indoor farmers' market.

Opening this month in Wacouta Commons is one of the two four-story buildings known as Printer's Row, which will straddle a new extension of Temperance Street. The name reflects the area's history as the center of St. Paul's once bustling printing industry. The 42 condos in the east building of Printer's Row are nearly completed, while construction on the 42-unit west building will likely begin later this year. Lander's final Wacouta Commons project, the Pressman Lofts, is still on the drawing board and will be located in what is now a parking lot on East 9th Street next to the Renaissance Box building.

Initially, Lander wanted to have a pedestrian walkway separating the two Printer's Row buildings, but the city insisted on the extension of Temperance Street to create a more lively urban block, according to St. Paul senior planner Lucy Thompson. Lander wasn't



BRAD STAUFFER

Developer Michael Lander talks about Printer's Row outside the downtown condominium complex.

convinced, but he now sees the street frontage as a primary attraction for future residents.

"It's going to be a beautiful street and the principal amenity in the development," he said. "People will come in and look at it and say, 'there's nothing like it in St. Paul. I want to live on that street.'"

The new section of Temperance Street will reflect an updated style of Boston's famous Back Bay, where narrow streets fronted by

brownstones and shaded by trees team with life, Lander said. The first-floor condos in Printer's Row have large windows facing the street, and the condos above feature balconies with views of the activity below. Models of the condos will be featured during the Parade of Homes September 10 to October 9. The prices range from \$159,000 for 750 square feet to \$529,000 for 3,000 square feet.



16 PRINTER'S ROW

Printer's Row represents a marked departure from the other buildings Lander has completed in Wacouta Commons. City design guidelines called for construction materials commonly found in nearby buildings, and in most cases this meant one or another shade of brick. For Printer's Row's facades, however, Lander wanted to add some visual punch. The exterior features stucco of crimson and burnished yellow, metal and various shades of brick.

"The guidelines didn't initially allow us to be so modern and exuberant," Lander said, but the city and the local Capitol River District Council agreed to the new mix of material and colors.

Thompson applauded Lander's early efforts to meet with the Capitol River Council. "We were getting criticism that all you ever saw in new developments was taupe brick and stucco," she conceded. "We decided we wanted to see more materials on the facade and less masonry than what is found in the warehouse vernacular. We wanted them to be more modern buildings."

Lander's earlier buildings in Wacouta Commons look a touch more traditional than Printer's Row, yet still offer the kind of housing rarely found in or near downtown. The first two projects, Essex on the Park (38 units) and Dakota on the Park (37 units), have wide stoops and large windows overlooking the new park. The second project, Sibley Court Apartments, includes 122 rental units, a handful of them for low-income residents.

"The popular conception is there's a risk that rental will degrade the ownership properties, but this hasn't happened," Lander said.

A historic warehouse housing a state agency became the 9th Street Lofts, with 49 units featuring concrete walls, huge windows and large open rooms that residents can configure to fit their lifestyle. Lyon Court, next door to the 9th Street Lofts, offers 60 units of senior housing.

"This is a neighborhood where you see young hipsters on cell phones, seniors, middle-aged couples, families with little kids,"



A model dining room in the Printer's Row condominiums on Temperance Street.

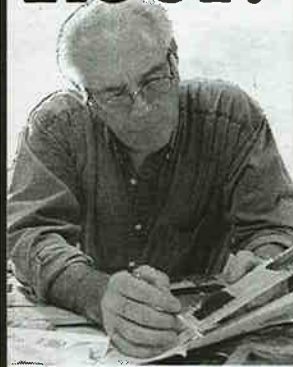
Lander said. "It's a great mix."

Thompson called it "courageous" for Lander and Sherman to mix rental units, owner-occupied homes and low-income housing in the same development. "It's not something many developers would do," she said.

"George Sherman and Michael Lander have done a good job of extending the idea of Lowertown," said the Reverend William Englund, pastor of the nearby First Baptist Church and a member of the Capitol River Council. "It's brought people to the neighborhood, and that's not a small thing since before, this area was all asphalt parking lots and pigeon warehouses."

Lander has one regret. The warehouse that first attracted him to the Northeast Quadrant was demolished before he could make a bid. "Today, that building would not have been taken down," he said. More likely, it would have become one of his trademark condos in St. Paul's newest neighborhood.

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## More up-and-coming housing

**The Aberdeen**  
Marshall and Western  
56 condos, 51 sold  
\$279,900 to \$1.1 million  
July 2005

**Armstrong House**  
Eagle Parkway and  
Shepard Road  
4 condos  
mid-\$500,000 to \$800,000  
Model opening Sept. 15

**Fitzgerald Condos**  
Wabasha and Exchange  
40 condos, 30 sold  
\$80,000 to \$200,000  
September 2005

**Great Northern Lofts**  
281 E. Kellogg Blvd.  
53 condos, 47 sold  
\$599,000 to \$775,000  
Late 2004

**Highland Heights**  
605 S. Snelling Ave.  
24 condos, 11 sold  
\$279,000-\$349,000  
Summer 2004

**Highland Pointe**  
West 7th and Davern  
145 townhouses/condos,  
82 sold  
\$184,000 to low \$400,000s  
July-November 2005

**Island Station**  
Randolph and Shepard Rd.  
96 condos/townhouses in  
first phase, 31 sold  
\$279,000 to \$1.35 million  
July 2007

**Lot 270**  
4th and Wall streets  
42 condos, 16 sold  
\$184,900 to \$449,900  
October 2005

**The Lowry**  
350 St. Peter St.  
130 condos, 85 sold  
\$150,000 to \$450,000-plus  
June 2005

**9th Street Lofts**  
9th and Sibley streets  
49 lofts, 45 sold  
\$179,000 to \$500,000  
Fall 2004

**Oxford Hill**  
Grand Avenue and Oxford  
31 condos, 30 sold  
\$279,000 to \$750,000  
January 2006

**Ramsey Hill Brownstones**  
Dale Street and Dayton  
10 condos  
\$360,000-plus  
Winter 2006

**River Park Lofts**  
245 E. 6th St.  
119 units, 60 percent  
\$179,000 to \$499,000  
April 2006

**Rowhouses at Snelling**  
535 S. Snelling Ave.  
20 condos, eight sold  
\$399,900 to \$499,900  
June-July 2005

**Shadow Falls**  
Marshall and Otis avenues  
42-44 condos  
\$375,000 to \$900,000  
Fall 2006-summer 2007

**Union Depot Lofts**  
214 E. 4th St.  
50 condos, one-third sold  
\$200,000 to \$550,000  
Dec. 2005-Jan. 2006

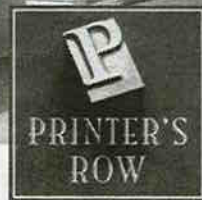
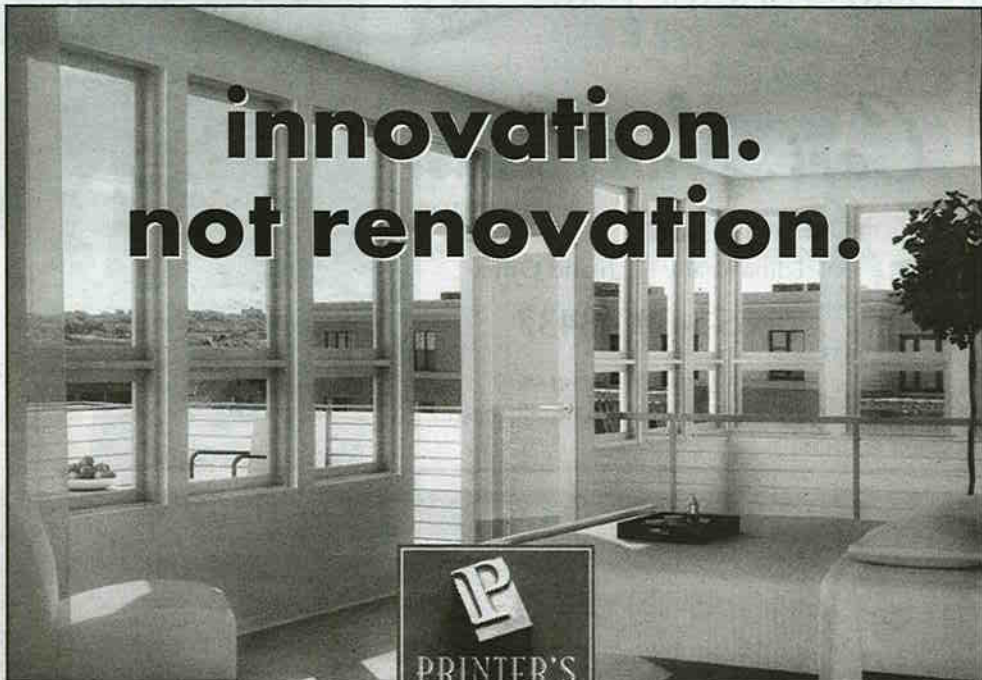
**Upper Landing**  
Shepard Road and  
Chestnut Street  
88 units (Block II), 44 sold  
\$219,900 to \$579,900  
Fall 2006-spring 2007

**Victoria Park**  
West 7th Street and Otis  
60 townhouses, 21 condos  
and eight single family  
homes in first phase (852  
units total)  
\$300,000 to \$500,000  
(townhouses), \$220,000 to  
\$475,000 (condos) and  
high \$400,000s (single  
family)  
Fall 2006

**Western Row**  
80 N. Western Ave.  
39 condos, 21 sold  
\$295,000 to \$1.05 million  
January 2007

**Yorkshire Place**  
Yorkshire and St. Paul Ave.  
9 townhouses  
\$369,000 to \$399,000  
Late spring 2006

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