

A Sea change to the area's housing market

Generation Y buyers could have home ownership options in Costa Mesa's Westside thanks to Sea House, the first development in the city by MBK Homes.



The Sea House development at the end of West 18th Street in Costa Mesa will have 33 units when complete. All the three-story homes will have rooftop decks, some with ocean views. (DON LEACH, Daily Pilot / July 13, 2013)

By Bradley Zint

July 13, 2013 || 6:59 p.m.

An "urban industrial" housing project in Costa Mesa's Westside is being marketed with Millennial buyers in mind.

Sea House — a 33-home tract at 1036 W. 18th St. — will feature three-story homes starting in the low \$600,000s.

The development will feature contemporary elements, such as rooftop decks with ocean views, USB charging stations and first-floor offices that appeal to younger buyers, representatives from Irvine-based developer MBK Homes said during a press tour Friday.

With the economy turning, Generation Y — generally defined as those born between the early 1980s and the turn of the century — is a growth market, according to MBK officials.

Some are entering their 30s and tens of millions are expected to graduate college between now and 2015.

"We are gearing up to become experts in the Millennial and the Gen Y buyer, what their particularities are, what their preferences are and where they work, whether they're Mac or PC, what they drive, what watch they wear," said Rick Fletcher, MBK's vice president of sales and marketing. "They have a different way of living than the typical buyer profiles that most builders have experienced."

Sea House is MBK's first project in Costa Mesa.

The project at the 1.6-acre site is going to be one of Orange County's highest-density projects with detached homes, Fletcher said.

The homes — which have two or three bedrooms, two full bathrooms and two half bathrooms — are between 1,587 and 1,785 square feet. The ground levels have attached, two-car garages and an entry room that can be used as an office or den.

The second story has the kitchen and a combined living and dining room. Some also have second-story balconies.

The third story houses the bedrooms.

Each house also has its own outside parking space, and there will be some onsite parking spaces and street parking. There are no individual yards.

Instead, there will be walking paths throughout the property, as well as drought-resistant landscaping and a "series of eclectic gathering spaces," MBK officials said.

Homeowners association fees will be about \$125 a month.

Sales are expected to begin next month, with people moving in by the first quarter of 2014.

When asked about the nearly \$600,000 asking price to a young generation — many of whom, according to recent studies, are burdened with college debt and a lack of full-time employment — Timothy A Kane, MBK's president, said sales will be aided by the Newport-Mesa area's affluence and proximity to the ocean.

Furthermore, there are good-paying jobs and high-end restaurants nearby, he said.

He used surf/skate/snow company [Volcom](#), based on nearby Monrovia Avenue, as an example.

"Volcom is down the street, so there's all those executives at Volcom that need places to live," Kane said.

Banning Ranch, the planned housing and commercial development down the hill from Sea House in Newport Beach, also will enhance the community because it will provide direct ocean access, Kane said.

Sea House is at the end of West 18th Street in the eclectic Westside, where single-family residences are intertwined with business parks, light industrial buildings, apartment complexes and mobile homes.

The site near the southwestern edge of the city limits previously housed two 1970s-era homes. It is bordered by the gated California Seabreeze community and industrial businesses.

MBK bought the property in November 2012 for about \$6.41 million, according to property records. The City Council gave final approval for the project in June, though city officials first examined plans for a similar, 34-home project called Industrial 18 as early as 2007 that was submitted by a different developer.

In 2006, the council adopted the Mesa West Bluffs Urban Plan for the area, with the goal of encouraging residential ownership, nontraditional housing, live-work units and mixed-use projects there.