

Globe Real Estate

DEVELOPMENT

BY KERRY GOLD

On the north bank of the Fraser River, a building crane symbolizes the big plans that are unfolding on Musqueam land.

The Musqueam is the only native band within Vancouver, but the scope of their real estate holdings goes well beyond city limits. The band has decided the time is right to realize the potential development of their properties and become a major real estate player.

For a group with a population of about 1,200, it's a vast undertaking.

"We need to get out in the business world, and do things – I've said that for years and years," says Musqueam Chief Ernie Campbell, standing on the building site for a new cultural pavilion. "What we need to strive for is self-sufficiency, and no more [of] what I call government handouts."

Howie Charters is the Colliers International managing director who's been put in charge of launching the real estate projects that will enable the band to run like a full-fledged business.

"When I tell my friends what these guys are up to, their jaws drop. They say, 'You've got to be kidding,'" Mr. Charters says.

Real estate, he says, is the new Musqueam economy.

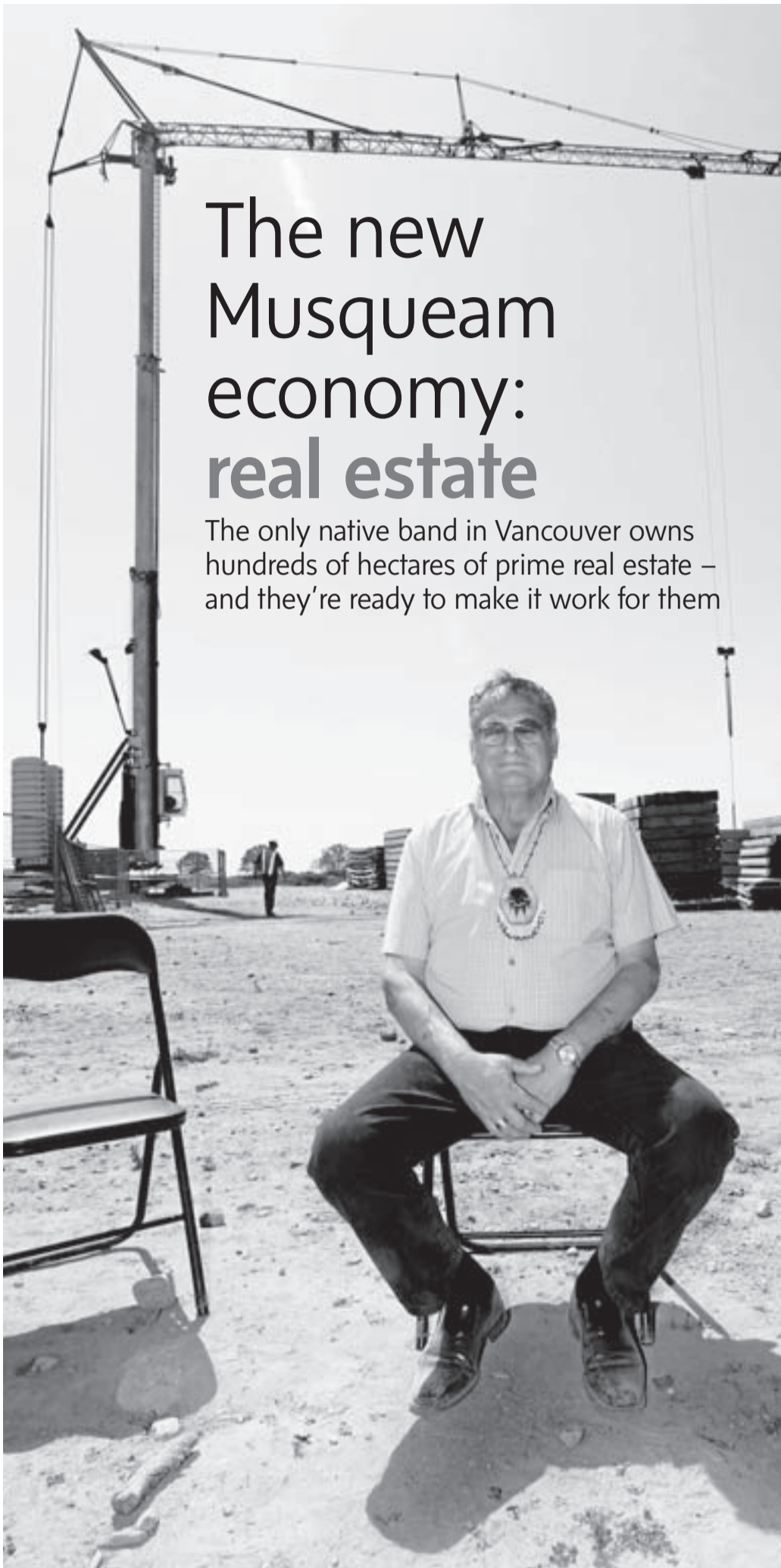
"An urban band isn't going to be doing a lot of hunting and gathering out in Point Grey – they are focusing on real estate development."

The band has a large asset base outside of the reserve, much of which was acquired through the reconciliation pact they made with the province in 2007, which gave them the 59-hectare University Golf Course and an eight-hectare parcel of land adjacent to it.

They now have a 15-year plan to develop the parcel, starting with a hotel in the next year or so. The Marriott chain, which has built about 60 hotels on campuses throughout the United States, has shown interest, Mr. Charters says.

If the community consultation gives the green light, the project – worth about \$200-million to the Musqueam – will follow with office buildings, rental apartments and 99-year prepaid-lease condos and townhouses that will use the same lease agreement model that the University of British Columbia currently uses.

On the public relations front,



"We want to give the public the opportunity to come back and learn from our point of view, our perspective, what the Indians are really like. We don't hide anything," says Chief Ernie Campbell, on the site of a new cultural pavilion. LAURA LEYSHON FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

The new Musqueam economy: real estate

The only native band in Vancouver owns hundreds of hectares of prime real estate – and they're ready to make it work for them

the band will open their own doors a little wider.

The Aboriginal Pavilion from the 2010 Winter Olympics is to be relocated to the reserve for use as a cultural centre open to the public for school tours. There is a plan for a soccer field that will also be shared with Vancouver soccer clubs.

For the long term, there are other, even bigger, plans.

The band is looking at providing their own wireless Internet and television service from a Sea Island tower to serve reserve residents.

There is a joint plan with a developer to create a marina, at a cost of about \$15-million, although it's too early for the band to say where the marina will be located. The band's Fraser Arms Hotel property in Marpole will undergo a \$2-million renovation. The Musqueam are also looking at developing 142 hectares in Ladner for commercial use.

The band's biggest prize is Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club, which is located on some of the most prime real estate in the city. But they have an agreement in place with the golf course tenant for the next several years, and Mr. Charters says the band has enough real estate ventures to deal with at the moment.

"If there wasn't a golf course there right now, we'd be talking about real estate worth \$1-billion," he says. "If the numbers worked out, you probably could get an early exit strategy for Shaughnessy to move out of there, but nobody is putting their mind to it right now," Mr. Charters says. "We have to make sure we have the capacity to deal with what's on the table right now."

Part of the undertaking includes a new awareness that the usually low-profile band needs to open the lines of communication with the non-native community. They learned a valuable public relations lesson after the 2007 transfer of the University Golf Course, which caused anger because people feared it would mean the end of the golf course in the prestigious area.

It's time for an image update. "The non-Indians just need to get to know us," Mr. Campbell says. "I think this will be a good opportunity for that. We want to give the public the opportunity to come back and learn from our point of view, our perspective, what the Indians are really like."

"We don't hide anything. I think if we educate people, then they will understand us."

The Musqueam also recently purchased the Nokia Building in Burnaby, which will bring in about \$1.75-million annually for reinvestment. It's clear title, Mr. Charters says, "and we will put some financing on it and acquire more real estate."

"We do all right," Mr. Campbell says. "I think we probably supplement our budget \$3- to \$4-million a year. But it's still not adequate. We were short-changed historically when they designated reserves."

"I don't consider this a reserve because this has always been our territory since time immemorial. We go back [8,000] or 9,000 years. To me, it's not a reserve. It's ... our home."

When you own hundreds of hectares of prime real estate, you make friends with the development community. On the reserve itself, Aquilini Developments has recently built more than 40 new residences. EcoPlan International has created an overall community plan for the more than 162-hectare Musqueam reserve.

Kevin Hoffman, development manager for Aquilini, will spend three years working full-time from an office on the reserve as an in-house project manager. "I would think it's a unique relationship," he says. "But it's about developing relations and being comfortable working with them and them working with us."

Aquilini is the major development company behind residential projects including condo tower Richards and the Maynards Block.

"Obviously, we would be very interested in working in the future with Musqueam to explore opportunities that might come up – for sure that's what we want to do," Mr. Hoffman says. "When it's time to develop those other properties, I hope they ask us to work with them."

For Mr. Campbell, building business relationships is essential. "We have a very good relationship with some of the biggest land developers in the country. When we go into a joint venture partnership, then everybody makes money."

Mr. Charters puts it like this: "I'll make you a bet that within 24 months Musqueam is a member of the Board of Trade."

» Special to The Globe and Mail

DESIGN

Outer beauty, inner peace: the value of a well-decorated home



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People underestimate the importance of decorating.

As modern people, we are perfecting the art of alienation. A troubling fact: In North America and Western Europe, we're wealthier than we've ever been, and yet we have high depression and suicide rates. How can that be?

I'd hazard a couple of guesses: In many of our big cities and suburbs, we tend not to know our neighbours; our environments are designed more for automobiles than for human beings; and we spend more and more of our lives before the glare of television and computer screens. In this kind of world, it's hard to remember where you are.

Our homes cannot extend this feeling of dislocation. They must be places in which we locate and recover ourselves. Home is where our psyche knits itself back together after the day's exertions. It's where we take our ease.

And in this recuperation, decoration is crucial. Now, it's possible this sounds like a designer trying to justify the existential significance of her life's work, making the case that decor is the doorway to

happiness. It's not. A well-decorated home won't ensure you a contented life, just as getting a good night's sleep won't ensure your next day's success. But without either, your chances are slimmer.

So how to get the decoration right? Of course, no prescription will suit everyone: Each person is unique, and simply telling you to buy these curtains or that lamp won't do. But answering a few simple questions can draw you closer to a solution that's right for you. And so we arrive at the psychological portion of the article. Recline on a sofa if it makes you comfortable.

When was your most peaceful moment?

For me, it was lying in a hammock on the porch of a rented bungalow, looking out into the jungle of Costa Rica. It was a hot June afternoon in 2006, two days after wrapping my frenetic first season of *Take It Outside*. I'd absconded from the intensity of workaday life and made myself unreachable.

For the first time in months, it seemed, I felt and heard the world around me: the smoothness of the larch floorboards under my bare feet, the lightness of the linen dress on my skin, the cacophony of the vast jungle.

The poignant physicality and isolation of that moment gave me ease. And I've remembered it. When I set to decorating my apartment back in Vancouver, I got a place with hardwood floors, and kept it warm enough that



Kelly Deck's home decor is inspired by the peace she felt on holiday in Costa Rica. In place of a hammock, her down-stuffed sofa is long and deep enough for a horizontal afternoon. BARRY CALHOUN PHOTOGRAPHY

I could walk around in bare feet, all year round.

My furnishings are light, natural and unfussy, like the linen frock. There's no hammock in my apartment, of course, but my down-stuffed sofa is long and deep enough for a horizontal afternoon of listening to the world go by outside. The soundscape is more car radios and clattering bottle collectors than cicadas and howler monkeys, but that's okay. That's what my neighbourhood sounds like.

What grounds you? To feel comfortable at home, people need tiny, consistent hits of familiarity and

beauty. We should make a place for these in our daily rituals and small indulgences. For some, it's washing our hands with the same English Leather our father used; for others, it's the satisfaction of a sharp knife and thick cutting board. Think about what you do in a day, and where you have an opportunity to take pleasure or reassurance in it.

In my home, many things ground me. Two of high importance are a beautiful bed and cloth napkins.

My bed today has silk cushions and soft sheets, and I take care to make it as luxu-

rious as possible. I owe this habit to my mother. She always bought pretty bedding for my sister, Jamie, and me, and banned us from breakfast unless we'd made our beds. I always hated that rule, but – funny how this happens – today I can't leave home with my bed unmade. The moment I draw tight the sheets, there is order in my world.

My mother also passed on an appreciation for table linens. Not fancy tablecloths, just everyday pizza napkins. Whether it's the cloth at the coffee table or an impromptu meal with friends, I find that the napkins ritualize a meal

and elevate it from the mere ingestion of food. I feel better for having them.

What objects say something essential about you?

I have a brown ceramic bowl full of beach rocks that always occupies a prominent place in my home. The bowl was a gift from Gailan Ngan, an artist whose work I sold at the boutique I opened out of art school. Each of the rocks has come home with me from one corner of the planet or another, marking my journey there.

The idea is that we need to see ourselves, and our past, reflected in our homes. Our lives, however unfathomable and arbitrary seeming, have a history: I was, therefore I am. This is no trifling point. In a world in which we're so often anonymous, at home we must have a name.

Now, this doesn't mean that every photograph, bus transfer and kindergarten finger-painting has to go up on the wall. Not everything you touch says something essential about you. My advice is to choose carefully the few items that do, and give them pride of place in the decor of your home.

Modern living can wear us down and make it hard for us to locate ourselves. But we needn't carry the alienation across the threshold. With some consideration and effort, home can be a place of ease and comfort. We regain a place, a name, a history and the energy to welcome another day.