

Belterra Cohousing

Bowen Island



Belterra Mission

To create and sustain an evolving community that embraces respect for a diverse group of ecologically accountable and socially responsible people.



Cohousing

Some say cohousing is a return to the best of small-town communities.

Cohousing communities are created by the people who will be living in them. By design they are compact, energy efficient and socially cohesive. They reflect a desire to live cooperatively, with respect for nature and concern for the impacts of one's lifestyle upon local and global communities.

Cohousing originated in Denmark in the 1970s and migrated to North America in the 1980s. Currently, over 100 cohousing communities are flourishing in North America, providing safe neighbourhoods that combine the independence of private dwellings with the advantages of shared resources.

During the development phase the members and future residents are the directors and shareholders of a corporation that serves as the legal entity for the project. Unlike conventional development models there is no profit included in the development costs of a cohousing project. The homes are purchased at cost because the group funds the equity that facilitates the development and construction. Ownership converts to strata title on completion. Decision-making skills learned by the group during the planning and construction process provide a valuable foundation for achieving agreement.



Belterra Cohousing

Cohousing is attractive because it offers a way to live more sustainably. At Belterra, residents are a short walk from the Common House with its workshop and play areas, guest rooms, lounge and large dining hall and kitchen. Personal privacy is supported with well-insulated and sound-proofed buildings, while opportunities for social activities from gardening to wood working are just steps away.

The future residents of Belterra are drawn to the idea of creating a neighbourhood that is affordable as well as socially and environmentally responsible. We are a multigenerational community whose members bring a rich array of life experiences. Households consist of singles, couples, families with children — and pets. We manage ourselves and make decisions together for the good of the larger group. As neighbours, we respect each other's needs for autonomy as well as our desires for social interaction and interdependence.



Life on Bowen Island

Travel writer Craig Platt has called Bowen Island “one of the most liveable parts of the world’s most liveable city.” Looking west from Vancouver’s Stanley Park, one can see Bowen Island where Howe Sound meets Burrard Inlet. It is among the largest of the Gulf Islands, roughly the size of Manhattan but with only 3700 permanent residents. Half of the Island is provincial Crown Land, while parks and Agricultural Land Reserves protect much of the remainder from development.

Snug Cove and Artisan Square provide a wide range of shopping, gallery and dining experiences. The island is known for its high quality restaurants and satisfying café fare. The best of a small town can be found here, including grocery and health food stores, a weekend farmers market, a library, a golf course and a full range of medical providers and services including a pharmacy and wellness centre. Bowen Island’s proximity to Vancouver makes commuting easy for islanders who work on the mainland, and the 20 minute ferry ride home at the end of the day is a great way to decompress.

Like much of British Columbia’s southwest coast, Bowen Island enjoys one of Canada’s most desirable, Mediterranean-like climates. Arbutus trees cling to moss covered rocky bluffs along the coast. Inland, cool forested slopes rise to 2,200 feet at the peak of Mt. Gardner. Dozens of hiking trails wind through Bowen neighbourhoods leading to Crippen Regional Park and the historic Union Steamship Company’s marina and ferry dock in Snug Cove.

Many excellent school and daycare options are within easy walking distance of Belterra Cohousing, including: Bowen’s Children Centre for day and after-school care, Bowen Island Montessori School (pre-school and kindergarten), Bowen Island Community School (grades K-7, West Vancouver School District), Island Pacific School (grades 6-9), and the Island Discovery Learning Community (a support system for those interested in home-schooling). High school students ride the ferry to West Vancouver, learning independence and responsibility along with their traditional studies.



Bowen is a tight knit community with one of the lowest crime rates in Canada. Island children grow up together with older kids looking out for the younger ones and families watching out for each other — like any other small town.

Bowen Island Quick Facts:

- Size: 50 sq km
- 20 minute ferry ride from West Vancouver
- 30 minute water taxi ride from Granville Island
- Municipal election turnout is often the highest in BC (90% in 2011)
- Bowen has its own RCMP detachment and one of the lowest crime rates in Canada
- A 9-hole golf course with magnificent views graces the southern coast
- Belterra Cohousing is a 20 minute walk (or 3 minute drive) from the ferry dock





Property Description

The Belterra community is located on Carter Road, a short walk or bicycle ride from the village of Snug Cove. The 10 acre (4.2 ha) parcel is nestled into a hillside facing east, with views across tree-covered slopes to Howe Sound and the snow-crested mountains of the mainland. Trails wind through the woods from Belterra; one follows nearby Terminal Creek to a waterfall, while another heads to the Cove.

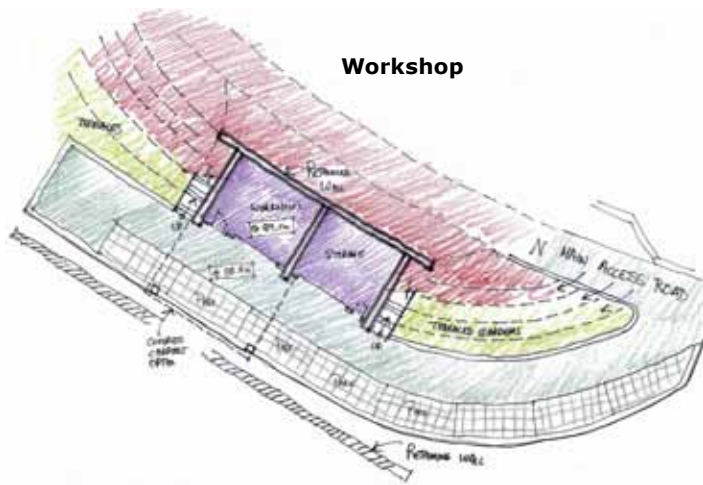
Belterra Cohousing's vision is rooted in a deep respect for nature. Working with environmental consultants, the original planners identified sensitive areas on the site and dedicated 4.5 acres to the municipality as a preserve. The dedicated area provides public access to a path that runs along a year-round, fish-bearing stream and under rare, old growth Douglas fir and cedar trees.

Many of the trees removed to make way for the homes will find a second life in structures within the community. One massive cedar trunk has been carefully set aside and will be memorialized as an architectural feature of the Common House.

The Belterra property welcomes the sun as it rises over the mountains and enjoys natural light until late afternoon year-round. At the end of the day, the trees, cliffs and snow reflect the sunset and on occasion the mountain peaks will offer us a rising full moon.



Looking east from the top of the Belterra property.



Site Plan

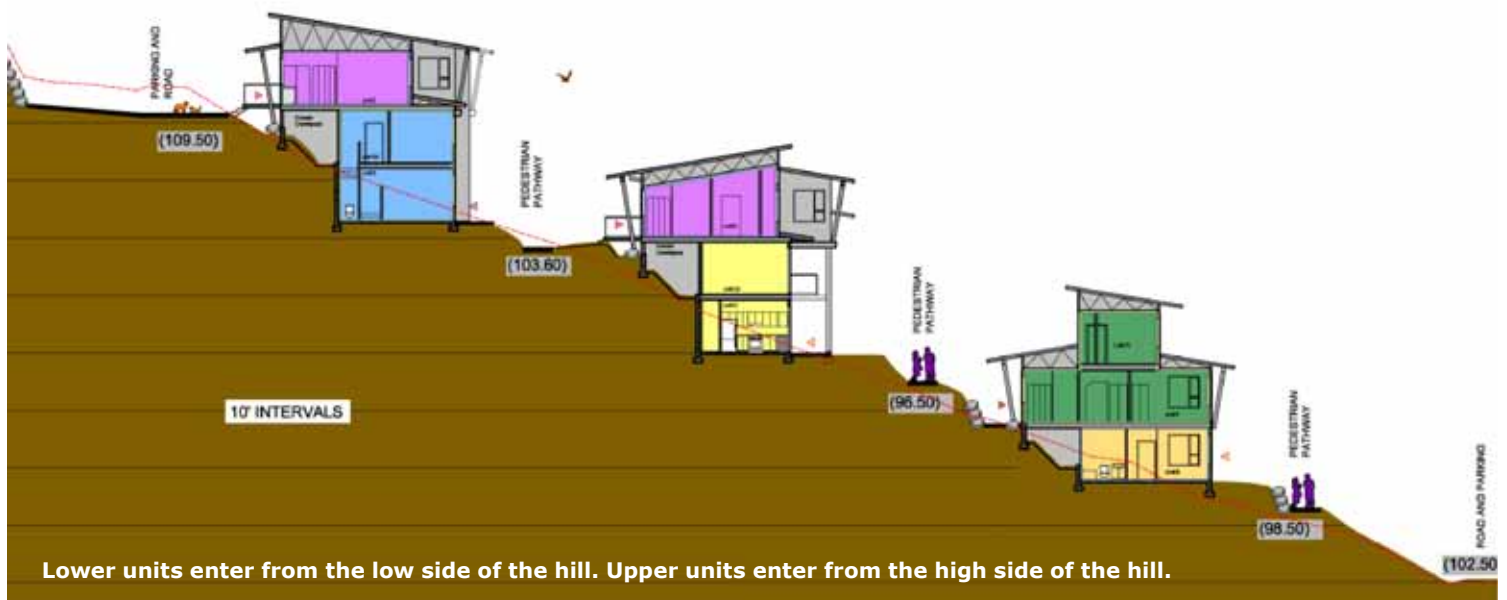
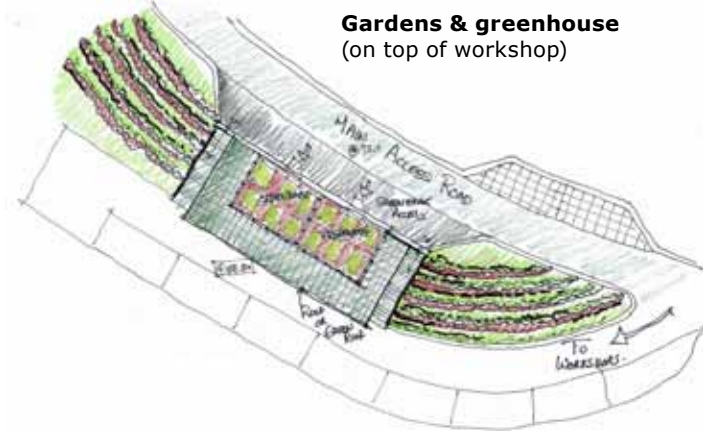
A single lane paved road curves its way up to the top of the Belterra property ending at a stunning viewpoint. Early on it was decided that this overlook would be preserved as a special place for the community to share.

All vehicles and parking are situated outside the perimeter of the residential development. Sloped pathways meander between the five buildings to provide access for pedestrians and small electric vehicles. The landscape design includes stone harvested on site, natural drought resistant vegetation and subdued pathway lighting.

The residential buildings and the Common House are clustered near a large, grassy meadow — a bright open area destined to become home to chickens, bees and fruit trees.

The Common House, with its commercial kitchen, multi-purpose room, children's playroom and large open spaces will become one of the community's places to gather and collaborate. And, only steps away, the adventure play area, trails, woods and grassy meadow are an outdoor wonderland where the fun is only limited to the imagination of Belterra's children and parents can relax knowing their kids are safe, healthy and most importantly — having fun outdoors.

Below Belterra Road to the south, you will find a second hub of creative activity — the wood-working shop, greenhouse and terraced community gardens. Belterra has attracted a number of gardeners who are eager to dig into creating community vegetable gardens, as well as planting on their own patios and decks. The terraced garden next to the greenhouse will enjoy sunlight from dawn until late afternoon.



Lower units enter from the low side of the hill. Upper units enter from the high side of the hill.





Contemporary West Coast architecture in a traditional European hillside village setting.

Building Form and Character

Belterra's soaring rooflines point toward distant mountaintops and the buildings' exteriors reflect their surroundings using natural colours and textures on the exterior walls, wood trim, covered porches, stone accents, and timber buttresses.

In keeping with the community's commitment to environmental stewardship, Belterra blends into the natural environment, with building materials derived from sustainable sources.

The architects have creatively stacked 30 homes in five buildings on the hillside so that every entrance is at ground level. Seven floor plans were designed to meet the diverse needs of families and individuals; and range from 500 sf studios to two storey, 1,252 sf three bedroom homes. One design includes a loft, which can be used as a third bedroom or office.

Large windows and open floor plans maximize natural light. Clerestory windows and optional skylights will make top floor units even brighter. Many of Belterra's homes enjoy beautiful views of Howe Sound and the Pacific Range Mountains.

Home Feature Highlights

- designed to BuiltGreen™ Gold standards
- hydronic radiant in-floor heating powered by a heat pump, in units that are on a single level
- two storey units: in-floor heating (as described above) on the first level, plus electric baseboard heating on the second level
- energy efficient appliances
- all units have a minimum of 9' ceilings, upper floor homes have vaulted ceilings
- 5.5' soaker tubs
- maple Shaker cabinets
- high-level sound-proofing (double-wall construction and 1½" gypcrete between unit floors) will reduce sound transfer between units
- energy efficient, Low-E vinyl windows
- plumbed for future solar hot water heating
- 50 year standing seam metal roofing
- rainwater harvesting system includes barrels as well as underground cisterns
- each home has its own private deck or patio

Private Outdoor Space

Parking areas, the Common House, roads, greenhouse and workshop, and building exteriors are all common property with title to ownership shared by all Belterra homeowners. The land, with the exception of the 'limited common property' that is designated for each unit as a patio or entryway, is also jointly owned and maintained.

Every home will have access to ground for gardening, and many of the lower level units will have a good-sized private yard. Owners may landscape their outdoor spaces and build fencing according to guidelines that will be established by Belterra owners before the project is completed.

The boundaries of limited common property (private outdoor space) are defined by the common wall between the units (side by side), by the back corner edge of the lower level corner units, and the edge of the pedestrian path, road, protected area or other property boundary.

Patios (included in all lower level units) will be finished in crushed gravel but may be modified per guidelines, after move-in. Decks (all upper level units) will have textured black aluminum picket railings. Dog owners will be required to fence their private outdoor space to contain their pet(s), but for others, fencing is optional.





The Common House will be the heart of the Belterra community.

The Common House

Belterra's Common House will be central to community life at Belterra, offering an extension to residents' homes with space for gathering and group activities. The nucleus of the house will be the large commercially-equipped kitchen and dining room. Traditionally, cohousing residents choose to share meals once or twice a week. Cooking is a great opportunity for socializing, and dining together develops a sense of kinship.

The kitchen was designed with input from Belterra's future residents; it boasts a butcher block island, refrigerator and upright freezer, two ranges (one gas, one electric), two sinks and a dishwasher, plus lots of storage. Double French doors lead to a covered outdoor cooking area and dining patio. Beyond the patio is a plaza — just right for impromptu performances or soaking up rays on a sunny day.

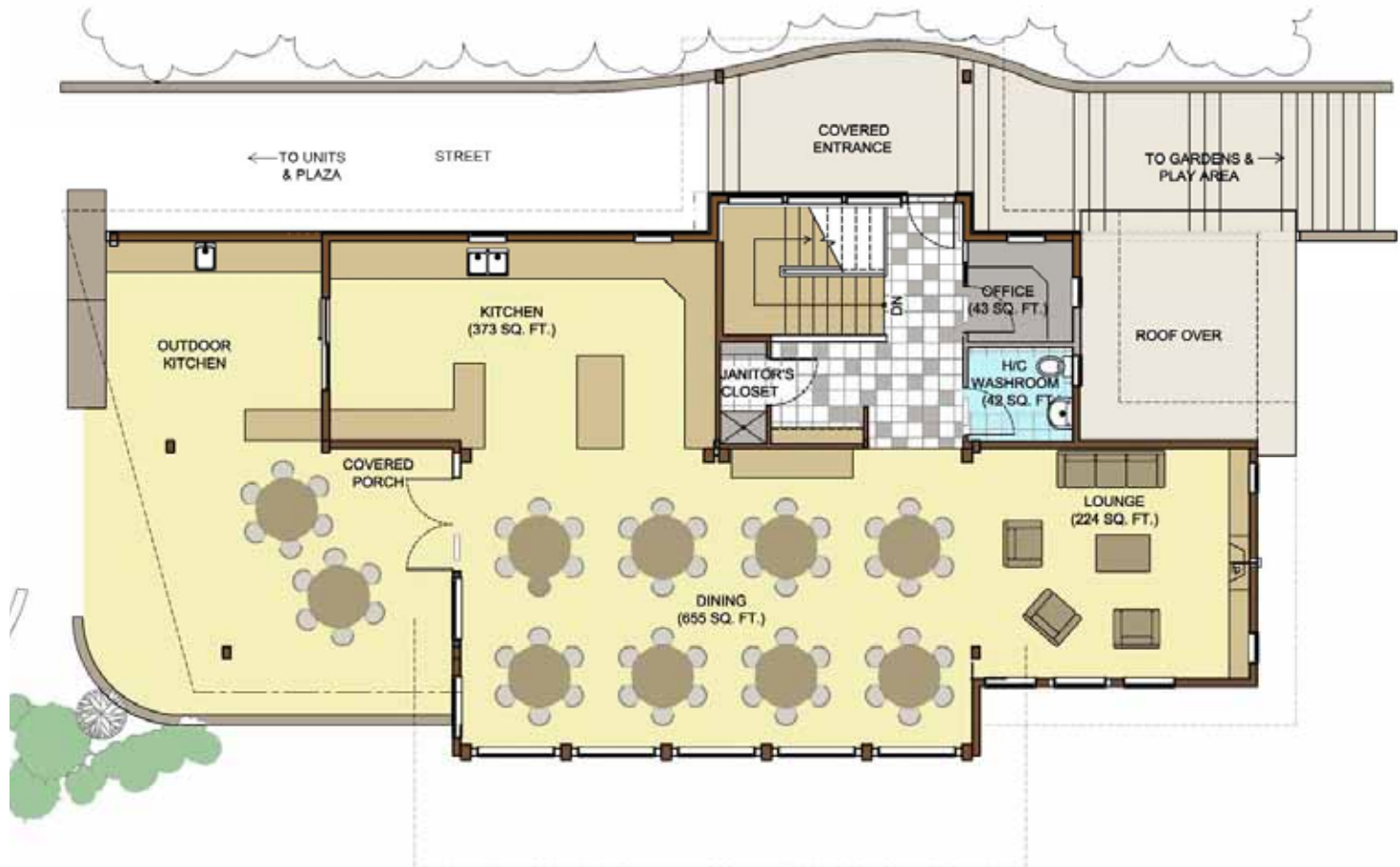
The great room in the Common House features a vaulted timber-framed ceiling and towering windows. The adjoining lounge is a cozy space, with a wood burning fireplace and places for reading and relaxing.

The downstairs was designed with a variety of uses in mind: there is a multi-purpose room with cabinets, range, sink and refrigerator that could be used for arts and crafts, yoga or canning. Two guest rooms, as well as a children's play room, are also located on the lower level.

During the design and planning process, prospective residents requested that the contractor leave the finish work as a community project. The approved plan specifies that the contractor will build to the drywall primed stage, leaving the final touches, from woodwork to painting and installation of light fixtures, for the owner-residents to complete.

Along with lumber and stone salvaged from the site, the volunteer labour and creativity contributed by Belterra residents will naturally establish the Common House as the heart of the community.

Approximately 3500 sf on two levels



Upper Level

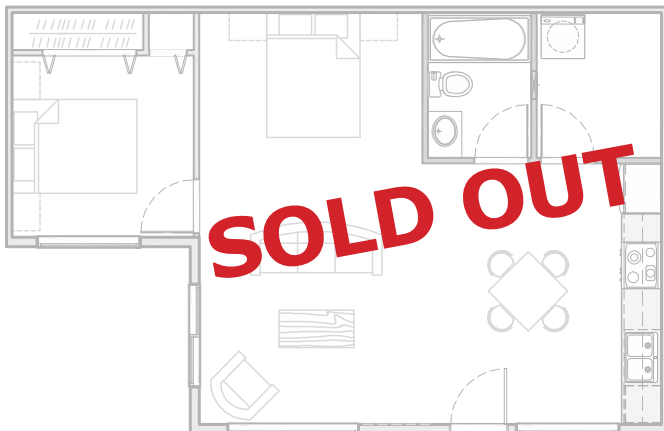
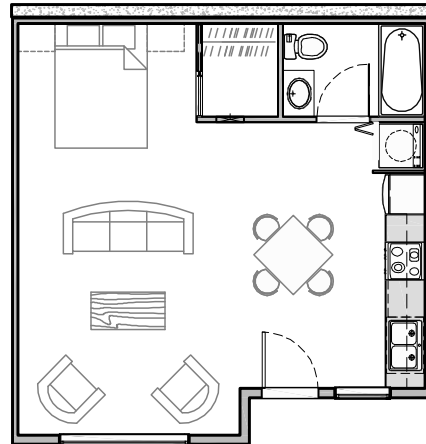


Lower Level

Belterra Unit Types

Unit A

- 500 sf on 1 level
- studio with one full bathroom
- open plan
- laundry off kitchen
- 9' ceilings
- private patio space at ground level
- *not to scale*



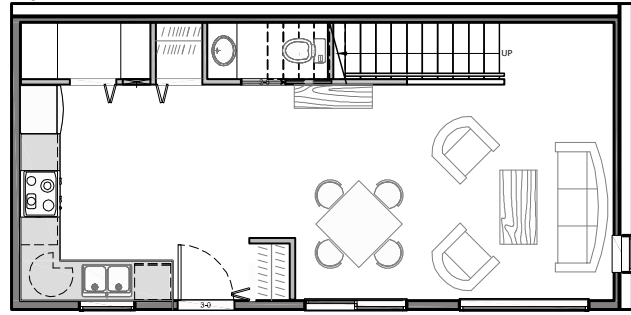
Unit B

- 706 sf on 1 level
- 1 bedroom + den with one full bathroom
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry room and pantry off kitchen
- 9' ceilings
- private patio space at ground level
- *not to scale*

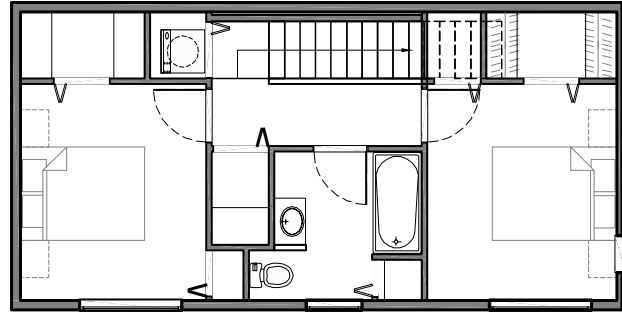
Unit C

- 1036 sf on 2 levels
- 2 bedrooms on upper floor
- 1.5 bathrooms
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry on upper
- 9' ceilings
- generous storage
- private patio space at ground level
- *not to scale*

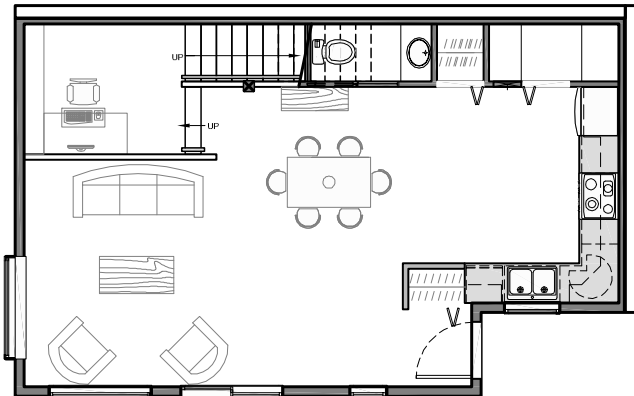
Main



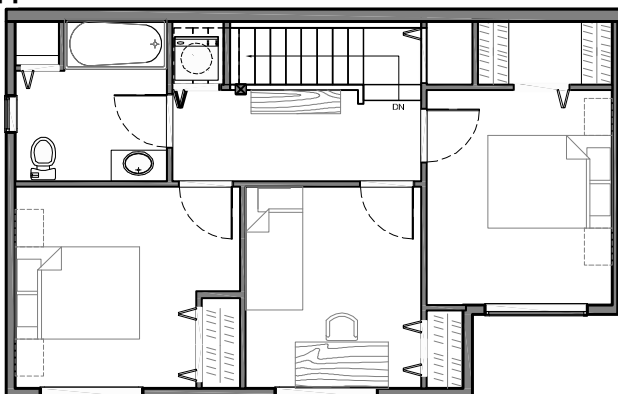
Upper



Main

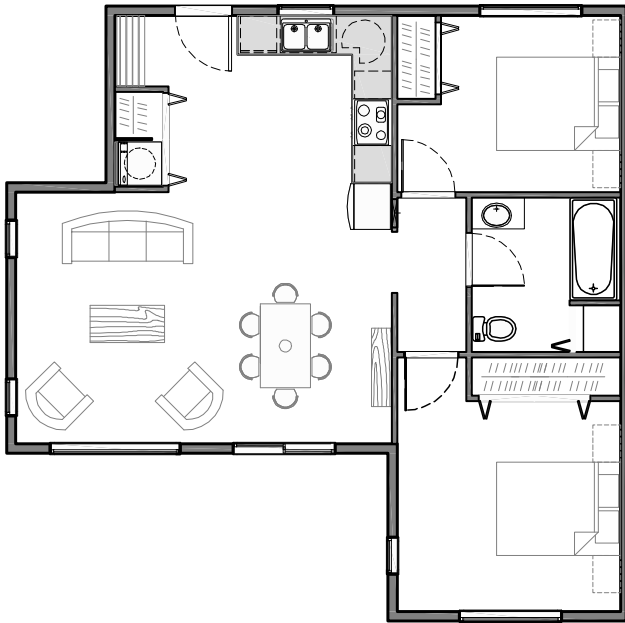


Upper



Unit D

- 1252 sf on 2 levels
- 3 bedrooms on upper floor
- 1.5 bathrooms
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry on upper
- 9' ceilings
- office space (with pony-wall to living room)
- private patio space at ground level
- *not to scale*

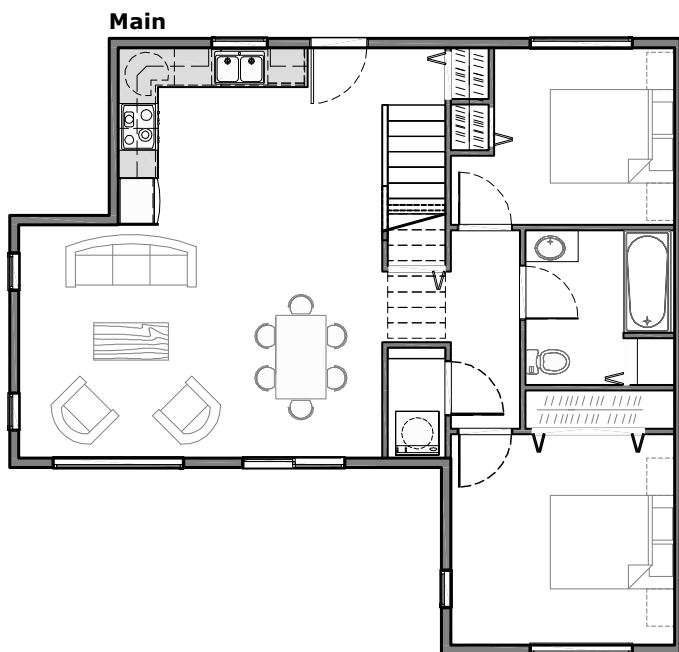


Unit E

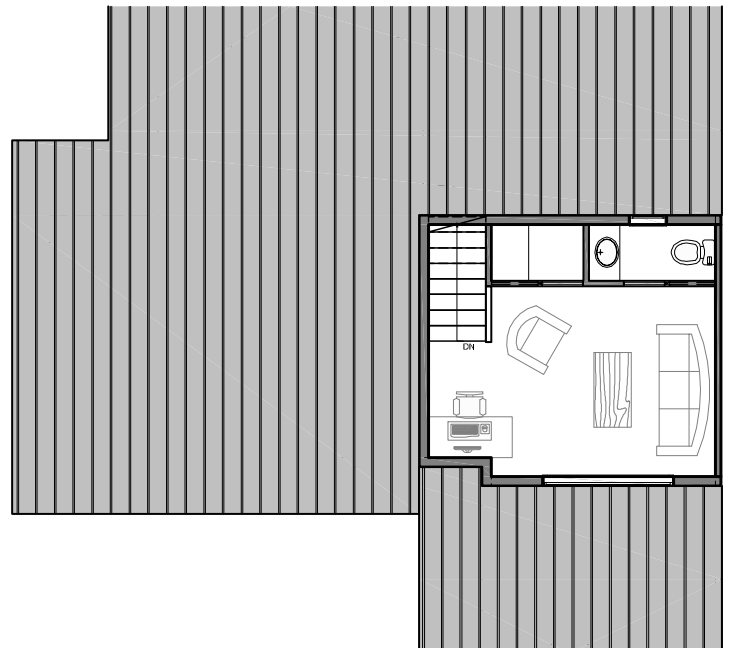
- 867 sf on 1 level
- upper unit
- 2 bedrooms with one full bathroom
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry off kitchen
- vaulted ceiling
- clerestory windows
- private deck
- *not to scale*

Unit F

- 1105 sf on 2 levels
- upper unit
- 3 bedrooms (including loft) with 1.5 bathrooms
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry room
- vaulted ceiling
- clerestory windows
- private deck
- *not to scale*

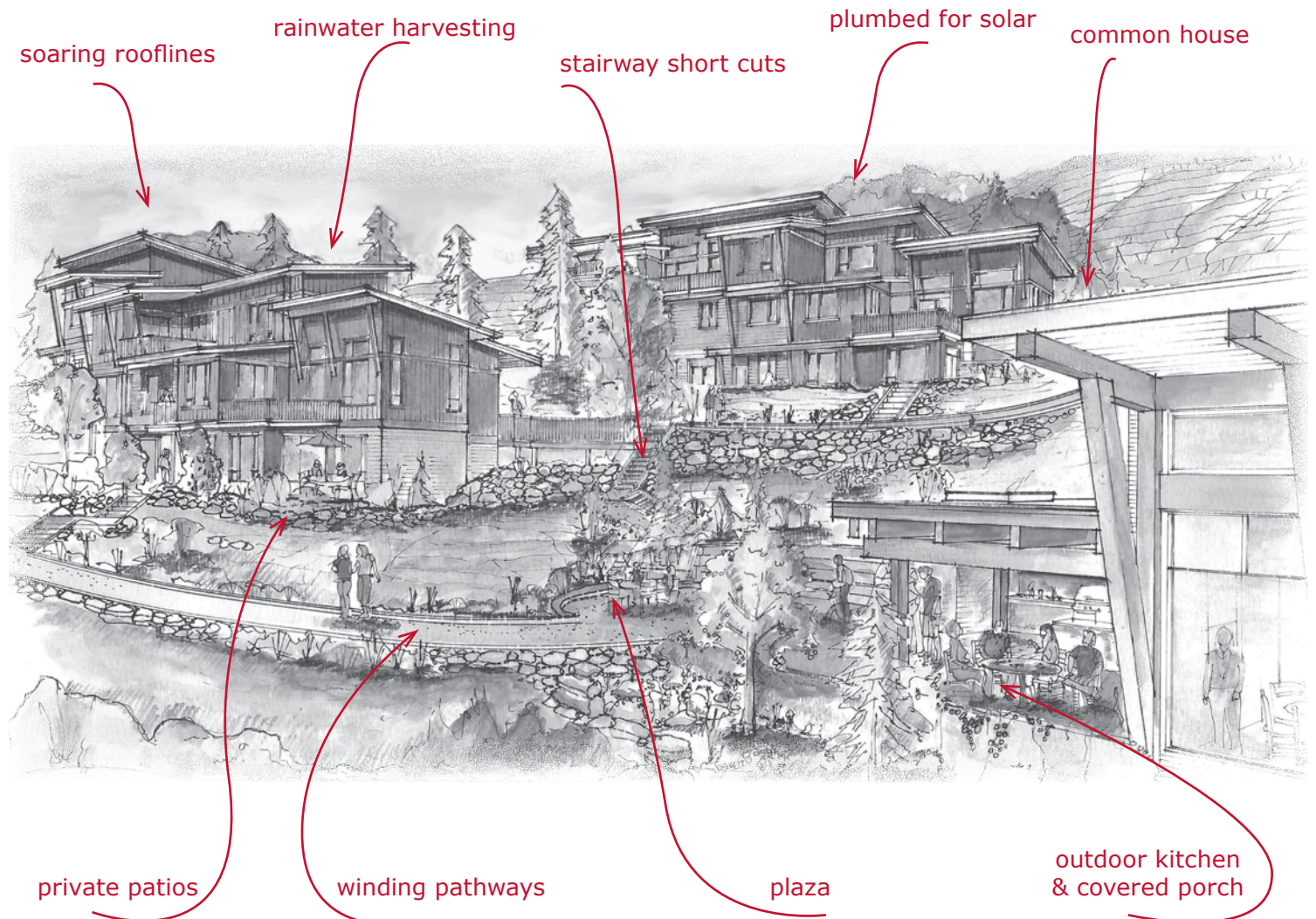
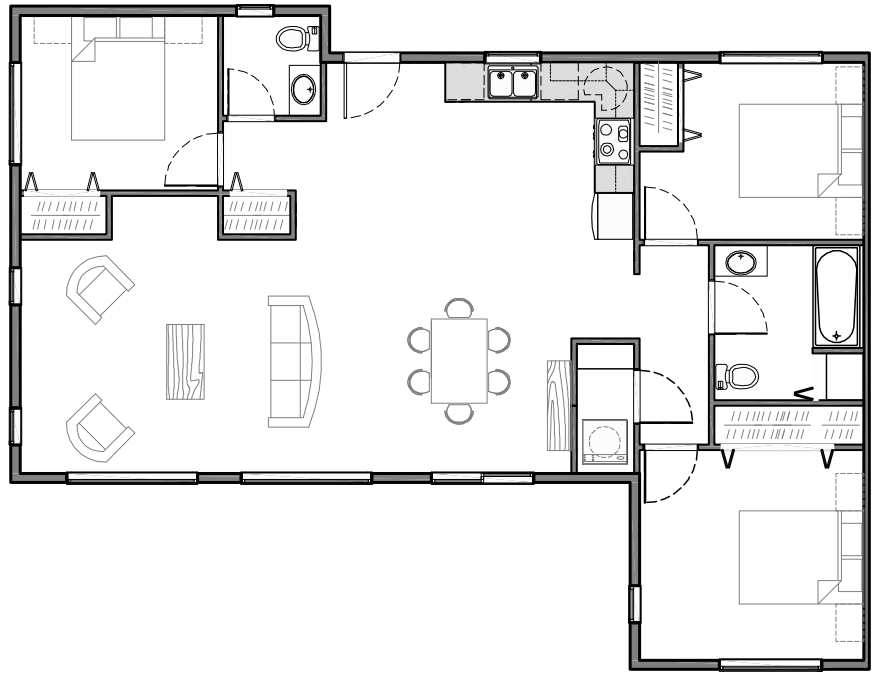


Loft



Unit G

- 1229 sf on 1 level
- upper unit
- 3 bedrooms with 1.5 bathrooms
- open plan K, L, D
- laundry room
- vaulted ceiling
- clerestory windows
- private deck
- *not to scale*



Professional Team

Belterra Cohousing has hired a team of qualified and dedicated professionals to facilitate design and rezoning and provide services through construction to project completion.

Ronaye Matthew of CDC cohousing development consulting is providing project management and community building services. CDC provided management services for four of the seven completed communities in BC. Ronaye has 35 years experience in single and multi-family development and construction.

Peter Treuheit of Mobius Architecture is an experienced West Coast architect and has provided design services for three other cohousing developments.

The project team also includes Creus Engineering, EABB Planning Services, Whitehead & Associates Environmental Consultants, Senga Landscape Architecture, S + A Falcon engineering, Chiu Hippmann engineering, Aqua-Coast engineering and Building Balance Consulting.

Julian Burtnick of Burtnick Enterprises, a general contractor with whom the project manager and architect have worked in the past, will construct the project. Julian is easy to work with and delivers a quality product on time and on budget. He is a certified BuiltGreen™ builder and will be providing a Guaranteed Maximum Price contract for Belterra cohousing.





Some Belterrans on a hike around Killarney Lake



Notes

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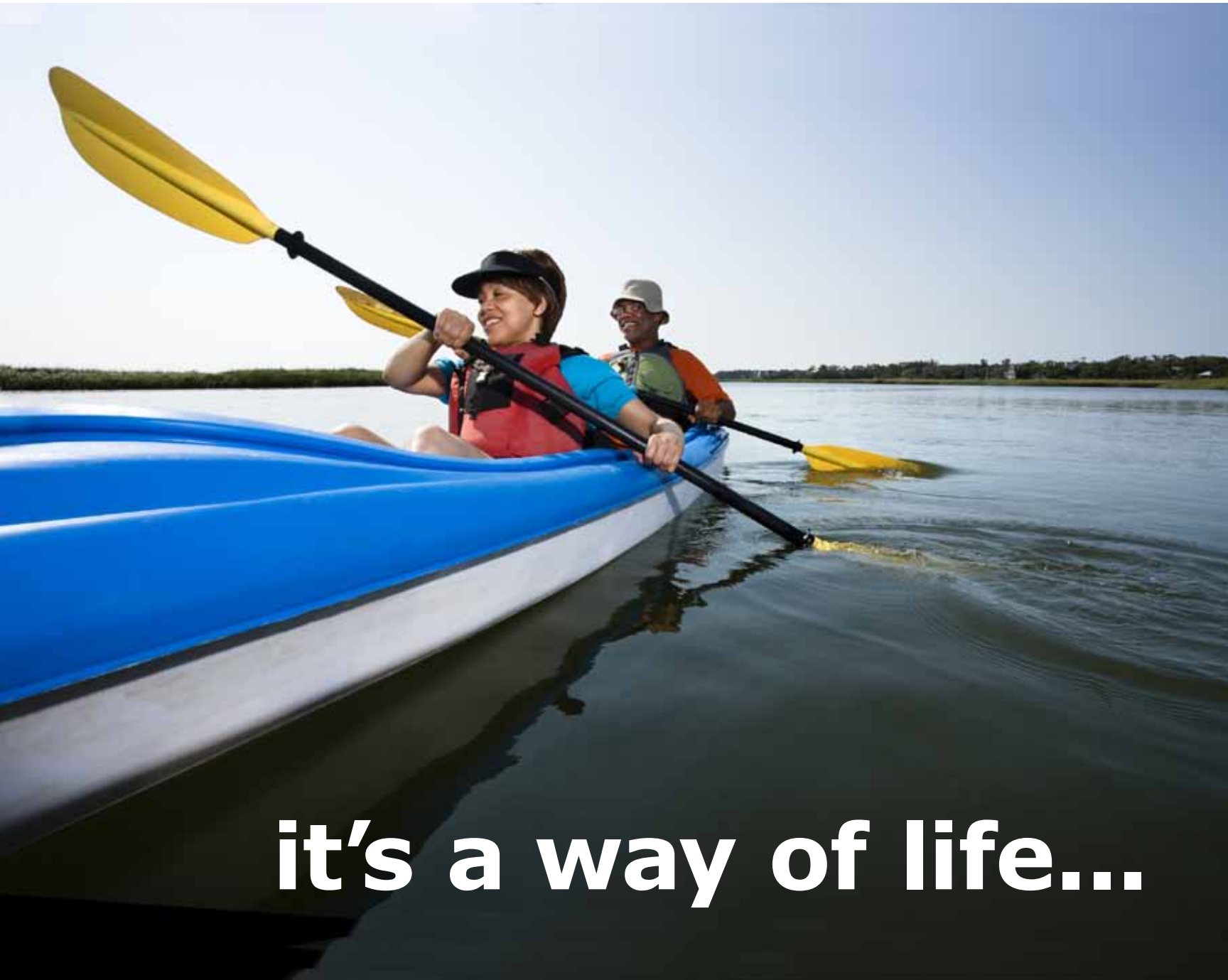
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it's a way of life...

be part of it