

## Homes

# Sola partners with Amazon in a Canadian first

Barb Livingstone • for the Calgary Herald

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Sola will be a 172-unit, nine-storey project along 14 St. N.W. between Kensington Rd. and 2 Ave. And, it has an exclusive partnership with tech giant Amazon. PHOTO BY OCGROW GROUP OF COMPANIES

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With an exclusive partnership with tech giant Amazon in its back pocket, sales for luxury condominiums in what will be Canada's most technologically innovative building launched this week in the inner-city neighbourhood of Kensington.

Sola is a 172-unit, nine-storey project along 14 St. N.W. between Kensington Road and 2 Ave., that developer Ocgrow Group of Companies is calling the future of condo living in Canada.

"We are the first developer in Canada Amazon has chosen to partner with and we felt Calgary and the real estate market was ready for this," says Harish Consul, president and CEO of Ocgrow. "The younger demographic really wants these services."

Sola's one- and two-bedroom units will range from 435 sq. ft. to 850 sq. ft. The initial 35 suites released for pre-sale this week (six two-bedrooms and the rest one-bedrooms) range in price from \$298,000 to \$435,000, for 435 sq. ft. to 603 sq. ft.

The project will include four penthouse units on the eighth floor, and four single-level, ground-floor townhomes with private entrances and garden terraces. There will be 9,000 sq. ft. of retail/commercial space on the ground floor and two levels of underground parking beneath the building.

Every unit, says Consul, will have a smart home hub offering safety and security, along with Amazon's Alexa/Echo cloud-based connection for voice control to do everything from play music, listen to news and weather and answer the door for parcel deliveries.

Sola will also have the fastest Internet connection speed in Western Canada — some 15 times faster than that found in other homes — and future technologies and capabilities are to be added through the Amazon alliance.

And, for the first time, buyers will be able to fully purchase their home — including choosing layout, floor, upgrades, etc. — online through Shopify.

Consul says the luxurious, but compact, contemporary design of the units in a vibrant inner-city community, reflects the younger demographic's desire to be close to restaurants, cafes, boutiques, downtown and the river valley pathways, as well as to both SAIT and University of Calgary.

Consul expects quick sales for the first phase, given the number of registrations already on <https://solacalgary.com/>. The next phase will not be released until early 2021. The existing building on site will be demolished by year end, with construction to begin mid-2021, and move-ins by late 2022 or early 2023.

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The high-tech units will feature open layouts with stainless steel appliances, a central, quartz-topped kitchen island, stacked washer/dryer and modern-to-ceiling cabinetry. Sixty to 70 per cent of the units will have decks.

Sola's amenities include an expansive terrace lounge and fitness centre overlooking the city on the top floor, a pet spa with shower, bath and drying station off the parking level, and secure bike rack (per unit) and bike repair bay.

The project, says Consul, will also start reinvigoration of the 14 St. corridor needed to turn that area of Kensington (leading up to SAIT and 16 Ave.) into a more pedestrian-friendly community. Ocgrow, a privately-held investment group involved in real estate development and venture capital, owns other property along 14th that he says will eventually add further vibrancy along the now-vehicle focused street.

Sola will start that process with improved streetscapes and inclusion of front street parking, so people can stop, walk and shop.

"All the development in the last 50 years has been along 10th Street (in Kensington) and now it's time for 14th's revitalization," says Consul.