

Local News

Homeowners Enjoy the Sound of Silence at Printers Corner

With more than 10 years of development experience, Winthrop Properties has experimented with numerous soundproofing techniques. But it is at Printers Corner, one of its latest projects, where buyers can enjoy the most successful noise-reduction strategies.

Located in the South Loop on the northwest corner of Polk and Wells streets, Printers Corner (www.printerscorner.com) is a 17-story high rise consisting of 88 condominiums, all of which are corner units. Floor plans measure 769 to 1,168 square feet and include one to two bedrooms with one to two baths. Prices range from \$319,000 to \$489,000, and deeded parking is \$36,000.

All homes include 1¼-inch granite kitchen countertops; imported Italian kitchen cabinetry; G.E. stainless steel appliances; hardwood flooring; floor-to-ceiling windows; crown molding; a washer and dryer; a tech center; Grohe bath faucets; marble baths; and a Whirlpool tub.

“Soundproofing is particularly important in high-rise living, and we believe Printers Corner goes further than most in the noise-reduction elements of the homes,” said Bob Horner, co-principal of Winthrop Properties. “Using extra layers of dry wall, acoustical caulk and concrete floors and ceilings, as well as staggering and capping the electrical outlets, are a few ways we’ve gone above and beyond.”

One important soundproofing element at Printers Corner is extra dry wall and insulation between homes, said Horner. Walls consist of two layers of drywall, metal studs with insulation, and then another set of metal studs and two more layers of drywall.

“One of the greatest transfers of noise is direct transfer, such as speakers near a wall or a TV mounted on a wall,” he said. “When a television is on or someone speaks next to a wall, the sound hits the wall directly. With four layers of drywall with insulation and metal studs in between, there’s very little chance that the sound will get through.”

Homes also feature staggered electrical outlets so sound does not transfer through openings in the outlets

into a neighboring home, said Horner. Outlets are fitted with extra insulation for additional soundproofing.

“In addition to staggering outlets, we also offset the metal studs between homes,” he added. “Metal conducts sound really well, so by staggering the studs, we reduce the opportunity for sound to transfer by taking away that direct line.”

According to Ibrahim Shihadeh, co-principal of Winthrop Properties, another challenge with sound is that it goes around things. “We use acoustical caulk on floors and ceilings as another way to reduce the transmission of sound,” he said.

Additionally, all floors and ceilings at Printers Corner are concrete, which is more soundproof than wood or other materials. The concrete is layered with an acoustical mat, plywood and then hardwood. “All these layers mean there is no direct transfer of sound from walking,” said Shihadeh.

Windows and balcony doors also enhance soundproofing, as they have dual panes with half an inch of air in between the panes. As an added bonus to the homeowners we’ve included Low-e windows as an added energy barrier.

“If you open the balcony door, you can hear the sounds of the city, but when you close it, it’s just amazing how the sound is almost completely sealed out,” he said.

Printers Corner is located in the popular Printers Row neighborhood of the South Loop, near Chicago’s most prominent entertainment and cultural venues, such as Millennium Park, the Museum Campus and the Chicago Theater District.

To reach the sales center and models, take Lake Shore Drive to Balbo Drive and head west. Turn left onto State Street, then right at Polk Street. Continue west on Polk Street to Wells. The entrance to Printers Corner is located on the northeast corner of Polk and Wells, and there is parking on the street across from the entrance. Use the call box to dial the sales center, located on the 16th floor.

Sales center hours are Saturday to Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The center is closed on Thursday and Friday. For more information call (312) 880-1800.

Winthrop Properties is a joint enterprise of developers Bob Horner and Ibrahim Shihadeh. Horner and Shihadeh share more than 40 years of real estate experience, during which time they have built and sold more than 5,000 homes, including new-construction loft buildings in Printers Row and the West Loop.

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