



Dutch firm plans floating homes in Miami as hedge against rising ocean levels

By DAVID PULLEY | Published: SEPTEMBER 12, 2014

Keep calm and float atop the rising Atlantic: that's what construction firm Dutch Docklands wants to think, as they plan to turn Maule Lake, a former rock quarry and boat racing venue, into a test location for their latest pilot project: state of the art floating villas for wealthy investors looking to hedge against the potential of rising waters in the future.



Now, this might seem a bit out there, but in Miami Beach's vibrant property market, testing offbeat and experimental concepts has become de rigeur over the years. The sell this time around: construct homes that would be impervious to the impending rise in ocean levels as a result of global warming.

This may sound silly at the outset, but with anecdotal evidence matching scientific prognosis in recent years, they believe that this solution will become an attractive life raft of sorts for home owners that are eying the rising Atlantic with an increasingly wary eye.

Their proposal calls for the construction of 29 luxury floating homes (complete with an exclusive activity island) over 38 acres of water in Maule Lake. These residences would exist completely off the grid and be built with safety features that would allow it to resist hurricane damage.

Each of these lavish aquatic estates would boast 6,000 square feet of space, possess a desalinization system to convert the ocean water beneath into H2O suitable for drinking, have solar panels for power needs, and come with a pool, boathouse, and other fun features that a wealthy occupant would expect.

The price for insulation against a soggy future where climate change induced flooding is the norm? \$12.5 million dollars.

While this proposal has a pie in the sky feel to it, Dutch Docklands has had a proven track record of similar installations around the world. From a prison in their home city of Amsterdam, to a floating mosque in the United Arab Emirates, they have successfully constructed similar structures.

So how will these homes work? The process behind the keeping these villas high and dry rides on Dutch Dockland's custom technology, which involves having telescopic pilings that auto-adjust with the rise and fall of tides. As high tides get higher over the years, the supports will simply push the house higher to avoid flooding.

Recently, a Supreme Court decision ruled that houseboats can indeed be considered real estate, a key development that has allowed this current proposal to move forward. Even still, obstacles remain, as many regulatory hoops will need to be leapt through, and environmental concerns need to be addressed. Much of the bureaucratic wrangling to come revolves around the fact that few rules currently exist for this type of development, and environmentalists worry about the manatees that call Maule Lake home.

Though this process and others will take time, Dutch Docklands is prepared to dig in for the long haul, as they are cognizant of the fact that South Florida stands to be one of the most affected areas by the menace of rising sea levels due to climate change.