

» HOMES & CONDOS

SPOTTED

Now 60, City Park still contemporary



CHRISTOPHER HUME

There was a time when the future of Toronto looked like Alexander St. A small artery that runs east from Yonge St. two blocks north of Carlton St., this was one of the first places where modernism came to the city.

For better or worse, this is where the ubiquitous residential slab made its Toronto debut. Today, of course, they seem to occupy every corner and line every street. Though they're taller now, in many respects little has changed.

The street's most interesting offering, however, is the trio of towers on the south side, the City Park Co-operatives at 31 and 51 Alexander and 484 Church St.

Standing 14 storeys tall, these midsize structures were designed and built in the early 1950s. By Toronto standards, that makes them worthy of heritage status. And indeed, the towers represent a unique moment in time, an era when architects believed that this new approach to design, the modern approach, would not only provide much-needed housing but somehow make our lives more rational and convenient.

Architecturally, they are pure International Style, not of the highest order, but entirely of their period. Empty of any decorative element, they are simple concrete boxes, undifferentiated and identical. The facades are lined with grid



CHRISTOPHER HUME/TORONTO STAR

The City Park Co-operatives were designed and built in the early '50s.

defined by glass balconies.

Although today we would see them as monotonous and predictable; in the '50s they were new and exciting and very contemporary. The post-war city was a place to

escape from; the neighbourhoods we revere were then being abandoned. It seemed a layer of grime covered Toronto, and the best quality a building, let alone a home, could have was newness.

Nearly 60 years later, the City Park Co-operatives, which were rental until 1989, strike the passerby as unexpectedly disconnected to the city. Just finding the front door must be an ordeal for first-time visitors, and for the most part what happens at street level is unfortunate. On the other hand, the buildings are well-maintained and a fresh coat of white paint brings out the formal elegance of the architecture.

With the advent of Mies Van Der Rohe's Toronto-Dominion Centre in the mid-1960s, modernism of a much more refined sort came to town.

In this city, the TD building remains a glorious one-off, an architectural singularity. The three apartment buildings, on the other hand, are still popping up everywhere you look. chume@thestar.ca



Architect Peter Clewes designed the building to appear transparent at the base. You can see through the building from the street to the back gardens.

Yonge-Eglinton ripe for repositioning

REDPATH from H1

Freed may be the condo king of King West, but he grew up at Spadina and Eglinton, and spent a fair bit of time at Yonge and Eglinton. "It's looked the same for 30 or 40 years," he says. "It's ripe for a repositioning. It needs to be elevated and positioned for the future."

Unlike King West before Freed began to build his empire there, Yonge and Eglinton is a well-established residential neighbourhood that has its entire infrastructure in place, with an abundance of shops, restaurants and transit to serve the local populace.

"For every individual interested in buying in King West, I think there'd be 20 people interested in buying at Yonge and Eglinton, by virtue of the transit and existing infrastructure," Freed says.

"The LRT is a game changer for this node, and with that comes all the amenities and retail," adds Dermer, citing the arrival of major American retailers like Urban Outfitters and Restoration Hardware. "They're all coming, and I think it will continue to snowball into bigger and bigger things at Yonge and Eglinton."

With so many competing condo projects under development in the area, moderator Danny Roth asks the roundtable, how does 155 Redpath stand out?



KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

The team behind 155 Redpath includes Johnson Chou, left, Jordan Dermer, David Klugsberg, Todd Cowan, Peter Freed and Peter Clewes.

"We feel the area's been devoid of high-quality design, architecture and lifestyle (condo amenities)," Freed replies. "So we're looking forward to raising the bar there, just like we did in King West."

That's how the project is being marketed, notes David Klugsberg, an executive with ad agency L.A. Inc. "The positioning is really that 155 Redpath is bringing design to midtown; that this is a product and lifestyle that haven't been seen there before."

It helps that the design team has a 30,000-square-foot property to work with. "It's probably double the size of what a lot of the other developers are developing similar buildings on (in the area)," notes Cowan. "So that gives us an opportunity where we can create some pretty amazing lifestyle and green spaces

for residents to enjoy."

Designed by Johnson Chou, all suites will have nine-foot, exposed-concrete ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. Units will be equipped with a Nest energy-saving thermostat (which can be controlled from your smartphone) and a front-loading stacked washer/dryer.

Kitchens have cabinetry custom-designed by Chou and stainless steel appliances. Bathrooms come with vessel sinks, glass shower stalls and porcelain wall tiles.

The building will have a ninth-floor amenity level with an outdoor pool and hot tub, poolside cabana lounge and a gas firepit lounge with barbecues and outdoor dining area. The condo will also have a fitness centre and a yoga facility.

The landscaped grounds will include a reflecting pool, fountain and

JUST THE FACTS

Location: Redpath and Roehampton Aves.

Developers: Freed Development Corp. & CD Capital

Architect: architectsAlliance

Interior design: Johnson Chou

Size: 36 storeys

Units: 470; 396 to 800 square feet

Prices: From the mid \$200,000s

Sales centre: 2239 Yonge St.

Information: 155Redpath.com

fire feature, as well as viewing gardens and lounge areas.

Chou says his goal was to create the feeling of an urban oasis. "We programmed different areas so there'd be space for seating and playing, reading, that sort of thing.

"These are amenity areas that are conceived of in terms of function. There are different visions of how people are going to be using the spaces."

For his part, architect Peter Clewes designed a building that's meant to appear transparent at the base, as if the tower is floating in air.

"It was important that it was visually permeable at grade, so you can actually see right through the building from the street to the back gardens," he says. "So there's a blurring of where the lobby ends and the amenity begins."

ASK JOE

Co-listing lets agents work together

JOE RICHER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Q: What is a co-listing agreement?

A: A co-listing agreement involves two real-estate brokerages both working to sell your property. The two brokerages would divide an agreed-upon commission between themselves.

Co-listing agreements can arise for several reasons: there are two owners of a property and each wants to use their own preferred brokerage (this sometimes happens when a property is being sold during a divorce proceeding), or a seller can't make up his or her mind about which brokerage to select because of differing, but equally attractive, marketing strategies.

A co-listing situation can be useful when a seller wants to work with a particular real estate representative (such as a friend or relative), but they agree that the expertise of a salesperson from another brokerage would help sell the property.

Not all brokerages will consent to a co-listing arrangement, since it will impact their commission, especially if a buyer is brought in by a third brokerage.

There may also be disputes between the two brokerages regarding the level of effort being put into selling the property, or conflicts between the sales representatives assigned by the brokerages.

If you have a question for Joe, email askjoe@reco.on.ca. Joseph Richer is RECO's registrar and is in charge of the administration and enforcement of all rules under the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. You can find more tips at reco.on.ca, follow on Twitter @RECO-helps or on YouTube at youtube.com/recohelps.



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