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— BRIAN WOODROW,
SENIOR
INTERIOR DESIGNER
AT TOMAS PEARCE



QUADRANGLE PHOTOGRAPH

Art Shoppe is composed of two towers. Each has its own lobby, but the foyers abut in a shared podium, providing residents extra wiggle room.

Safety first

CONDO DEVELOPERS LOOK FOR NEW WAYS TO KEEP RESIDENTS SAFE WHILE BRINGING THEM TOGETHER

MATTHEW HAGUE

When Capital Developments completed the 624-unit Art Shoppe Lofts + Condos in April, the inevitable stress of moving in hundreds of homeowners was amplified by COVID-19. Instead of simply worrying about co-ordinating freight elevators and protecting hallways from scuffs, the company had to ensure none of the new residents got sick. Some of the provisions came down to simple logistics. A set time was designated for each condo owner to unload their possessions, followed by a thorough cleaning of all shared spaces and surfaces before the next moving van arrived.

Fortunately, Art Shoppe is composed of two towers. Each has its own lobby, but the foyers abut in a shared podium, providing residents extra wiggle room. When one lobby got crowded, the other could be used to temporarily store furniture and boxes.

"The process took longer and required another layer of organiza-

tional consideration," says Todd Cowan, co-founder of Capital Developments. "It was successful, though, in part because of the extra space."

In addition to keeping the residents physically distanced, the experience also gave Cowan pause to wonder how much farther condo design can be pushed to help us adapt to the new way we're living.

Many developers, designers and tech startups are asking themselves the same question, leading to potential innovations — ultra-anti-bacterial surfaces, in-building Zoom rooms, shared (but not at the same time) workout pods — that could improve the look, layout and function of future condos.

"Every architect, every developer we are collaborating with, is talking about health," says Brian Woodrow, senior interior designer at Tomas Pearce, a studio working on more than 60 condo buildings in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Woodrow believes COVID-19 will have a lasting impact, effecting changes in buildings that range from subtle to overdue.

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A sprawling master-planned community is coming to Six Points

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What It Went For

Serene and private setting a key attraction of Walmer Rd. home

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“WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY NOW TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO SECURELY ENTER A BUILDING WITHOUT TOUCHING A DOOR HANDLE — EITHER THROUGH KEY FOBS OR VOICE ACTIVATION. I IMAGINE THAT WILL BE STANDARD ... — BRIAN WOODROW, SENIOR INTERIOR DESIGNER AT TOMAS PEARCE



QUADRANGLE PHOTOGRAPH

The large open lobby in the upcoming K Square tower at Kennedy and the 401 allows people to gather while keeping their distance.

SAFETY

Continued from PH1

“We have the technology now to allow people to securely enter a building without touching a door handle — either through key fobs or voice activation,” he says. “I imagine that will be standard going forward.”

One Toronto startup, Bio-Connect, is working on a different, hands-free solution: a phone-based app that works with 80 per cent of existing fob and card readers (no renovations or new hardware required). In a building’s vestibule, a resident scans their face with their phone camera, and facial-recognition software triggers the door locks. As a backup, or for other surfaces people still need to touch, Guelph-based startup EnvisionSQ recently submitted a clear coating called NanoCleanSQ for Health Canada approval that lasts for up to a year, kills 99 per cent of bacteria, including COVID-19, and can be applied to just about any material—including upholstery fabrics and metal. (EnvisionSQ is also working on

No-touch technology could become future standard

a filtration system that can purify air as it circulates in large buildings.)

Once inside a condo building, residents and guests typically encounter a front desk. These days, that’s less likely due to the mountain of Amazon boxes sitting on top of it. “The sheer volume of parcels being delivered to a 500- or 600-person condo these days far exceeds what the typical parcel room was designed for,” says Capital Development’s co-founder Todd Cowan. “For these bigger buildings, we’re looking at having a day porter — someone who can drop packages to an allocated spot by people’s doors to stop bulk up at the front desk, to stop people having to congregate at the desk to get their things.”

Using the ground floor of condos to more effectively distribute packages is a

focus for architecture office Quadrangle and their social impact brand Human Space. But the company isn’t just thinking about how to get residents their Blue Apron orders; they’re looking at ways condos can become vital distribution points for the neighbourhood. During COVID-19, they released a concept called Neighbourhood Nest, which reimagines the typical lobby, making it larger, equipping it with backup power and high-tech air filtration systems, and providing space that can be used as a pickup point for groceries and provisions by anyone who lives in the area. It’s an ideal the studio hopes developers will aim for.

Post-pandemic, a Neighbourhood Nest could be reconfigured for a different purpose: a place to stay cool in a heat wave, a

pop-up café for small concerts — anything. “The concept came about because we were trying to see how condos can help with community resiliency,” says Michelle Xuereb, director of innovation at Quadrangle. “Resiliency is important, and goes beyond the current pandemic. It’s about providing areas of refuge in a building during a climate emergency, for example. It’s also about bringing people together.”

In order to move Neighbourhood Nests from concept to concrete, Xuereb says it would help if the city allowed developers to reallocate some of the amenity space they are required by the city to provide — typically, four square metres per resident. Rather than an underused gym or steam room tucked deep within the building, some of the that

space could be better used in an expanded, souped-up lobby. “The city could really benefit by having all these extra places of refuge,” says Xuereb. Residents would benefit by connecting more closely with their neighbours.

Woodrow agrees that building community should be a priority focus for new condo designs. “With more people working from home, I can see the risk of residents getting lonely,” he says. He loves the idea of large, open lobbies that allow people to gather but also stay distant, having designed such a space for the upcoming K Square at Kennedy and the 401. He also imagines gyms and party rooms evolving, too. “For workouts, I see Peloton pods becoming more popular,” he says, referring to the stationary bikes with built-in

screens that connect to either live or pre-recorded coaches or training partners. “I also see people wanting small, bookable meeting rooms — a place to have a more professional Zoom background than your kitchen.” This is an idea Cowan echoes: “Because home offices aren’t always possible, I see small meeting rooms being an important amenity. They are also nice because they get people out of their apartment,” even if they’re still in the same building.

For post-workday, or post workout, “we’re designing a video game room,” says Woodrow, referring to a development launching soon in the city, explaining that the space replaces a typical condo theatre and allows a few people to play video games on a big screen, in sync with players in other buildings, or other parts of the world. “It allows people to be social without being together,” he says. “And people just love video games anyway. It was in the works before COVID-19, but I think it works really well for the times we are in.”

Postmedia News

Funnyman’s home is his castle

Steve Harvey, one of the original Kings of Comedy, now has a new castle. The funnyman has snapped up an Atlanta mansion formerly owned by Tyler Perry for US\$15 million, reports Variety. Perry sold the 35,000-square-foot home in 2016 for \$17.5 million.

The mansion has seven bedrooms and 9.5 baths, and the amenities are abundant. They include: 17 acres of manicured lawns; a 70,000-gallon infinity-edged swimming pool; lighted tennis court; full gym; spa; guest house; an advanced security system; theatre; indoor swimming pool; wine cellar; and an underground

barroom complete with catering kitchen.

The seller was evangelist David Turner, a former businessman.

Harvey, who hosts Family Feud and the Miss Universe competition, also owns another home in Atlanta and a 6,500-square-foot (603-square-metre) house in Little Elm, Tex., which is currently listed for nearly US\$1.1 million. However, before buying Perry’s old estate in the posh Buckhead area of Atlanta, Harvey and his family mainly lived in the mountains above Beverly Hills, Calif., in a \$100,000/month rental mansion in the Beverly Park community.

Melissa Hank, Postmedia News



REALTOR.COM

Steve Harvey has bought a US\$15 million Atlanta mansion that was formerly owned by Tyler Perry.

FEATURING OUR HOME OF THE WEEK



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Happy Happy Sellers! This stunning designer's one detached home in Danville Village is officially off the market. We SOLD this one in less than 1 week, before the offer date. Congratulations to our clients who can now move on to their next endeavour. Stay tuned with us for more of our projects because they do not last long on the market - even during COVID times!

Our Buyers bought this before it came to the MLS in Lawrence Park. Exceptionally renovated and landscaped, this beautiful detached home will be their ideal urban oasis. They will enjoy walking to all the mainline minutes away. Congratulations to our Buyers!

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