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Stylish condos easy on the wallet

Lara Ceroni, Special to National Post | Jul 20, 2012 – 11:00 AM ET | Last Updated: Jul 20, 2012 8:59 AM ET



B Street Condos: Built on the site of an old school, the contemporary nine-storey structure will have 195 suites and ground floor retail space. Handout

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Toronto is continuing its push as North America's condo capital, with developers growing their projects in virtually every neighbourhood. With so much availability, buyers have much to choose from. But signing on that dotted line invariably boils down to one thing: Where to buy to get the best value. The answer? Purchasing a property outside the downtown core. Being flexible to this idea gives end-users more affordable options, but rest assured: Amenities and style do not suffer because of it. Here are three examples.

B Street Condos

The philosophy “Live in the heart of where life happens in Toronto.”

The design Designed by Hariri Pontarini Architects, the buildings are constructed to aesthetically blend into the neighbourhood’s storefronts and shops. Built on the site of an old school, the contemporary nine-storey structure will have 195 suites and ground floor retail space. Rather than a static roofline, they created a whimsical silhouette that replicates the rhythm of some of the smaller shops on Bloor Street. The aim is to preserve the integrity of the community, while at the same time adding architectural sophistication to its façade.

The space Interiors designed by Cecconi Simone, the design concept is in direct dialogue with the neighbourhood. Elements of industrial-era design have been reimagined in a more modern way: Eggshell white paint throughout, nine-foot smooth ceilings with plank laminate flooring and satin nickel finish contemporary hardware on swing doors; floor-to-ceiling window systems, subway-style ceramic tile backsplashes, energy-efficient appliances; quartz countertops and custom-designed cabinetry.

The perks Located in the well-established Annex neighbourhood, this new development is in the midst of some of Toronto landmarks: Mirvish Village, Little Korea and the Bloor Cinema, not to mention walking distance to restaurants and shops. Buyers will love the amenities: A spacious Internet lounge, yoga studio, hobby room (where residents can do anything from tuning their bike to assembling furniture) and a cold-storage facility where owners can have their groceries delivered until they’re home to pick them up. “It’s next to impossible to find [affordable] real estate in the Annex,” says Michael Klugmann, vice-president of Lindvest Properties. “It’s far too competitive; far too expensive. Buying one of these condos means a certain ease of living: With the amenities, the fact we’re located in an established community that’s right in the heart of Toronto. You’re not sacrificing your want for a high-standard of living. Simply put, this place sells itself.” (Starting price: mid-\$300,000s)



The Station: Envisioned by SMV Architects, the goal was to build an innovative, design-driven project that offers buyers a fresh, urban living space.

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The Station

The philosophy “Enjoy a sophisticated downtown lifestyle with a smart uptown price.”

The design Envisioned by SMV Architects the goal was to build an innovative, design-driven project that offers buyers a fresh, urban living space: Interesting fenestration and façade articulation through the use of a six-storey podium and two towers. They’re focused on the concept of “outdoor living” so almost all of the suites have wall-to-wall balconies with access from the principal rooms, whereas their Townlofts feature spacious two-storey living rooms with either a patio or courtyard, as well as a French balcony.

The space Dramatic. Centrally located Concierge Station in the two-storey entrance lobby and foyer. Outside, artfully landscaped grounds feature a grand courtyard; the city’s first private “Urbanas” (three private indoor/outdoor party rooms) replete with seven barbecues and designer-decorated outdoor and indoor seating areas. Interiors are art-deco inspired with contemporary twists of marble, stone, glass and lush laminate flooring. Also on offer:

European-styled kitchen cabinetry with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances; under-vanity mood lighting and ceramic wall-to-ceiling tiling.

The perks Adjacent to Wilson subway station and minutes away from Yorkdale Shopping Centre. At home, enjoy The Studio Club; a sassy seventh-floor amenity rooftop recreational facility with an outdoor lounge and dining areas, plus an infinity-edge oasis pool, games room, fully equipped fitness centre and his-and-hers steam rooms. The party room is designed with major entertaining in mind: It's outfitted with a large sound system, bar and catering kitchen. Wilson Avenue is a designated "Avenue" as decided by Toronto Council in its Official Plan. Meaning? The city has a vision for Wilson that will rejuvenate and revitalize the existing area, promising increased urban infrastructure and amenities. "Educated buyers should be aware of this since values will no doubt increase as development continues on the street," says David Hirsh, president and CEO of Brandy Lane Homes. "It's a very 'main street' principle that has never been done on Wilson Avenue — until now." (Starting price: \$370,000)

The Carnaby

The philosophy "The Best of Queen West."

The design Drawing inspiration from its namesake — Carnaby Street — London's west-end haunt full of funky shops, galleries, cafés and restos, this addition to the Queen Street West strip (at Gladstone) is a mixed-use development incorporating a 20-storey tower with 200 loft residences. Anchored by a dark-clad podium, the tower will read as pure glass and light on the north portion. Clean and vertical details on the balconies transition seamlessly into the lobby details at the lower levels. The southern portion, wrapped in precast concrete, creates a dramatic and graphic visual from a distance.

The space Distinct. TACT Design created a street-level landscaped connecting laneway between the



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developments to give the feel of a European-inspired, foot-friendly block. Neighbours are encouraged to sit, sip coffee, chat and coningle. A grassy, unbeknownst embankment at Dufferin and Queen is also being developed into a park. At the base of the development will be non-residential artist studios; on the south end of Queen will be a Metro grocery store and additional retail ventures all aimed to complement the project. The lobby will display double-height windows while cantilevered wall planes illuminate to create a sensory street-level experience. The Seven Haus lofts — cheekily named Herringbone, Tweed and Pinstripe — feature nine-foot exposed concrete ceilings, super-swank bathrooms and open kitchen expanses.

The perks Location, location, location. From the trendy to the cult, this neighbourhood is a kaleidoscope of arts, culture, fashion and food. At home, you have flexible lounge spaces and boutique hotel finishes. The Carnaby has two communal social spaces with chic leather and CaesarStone interiors where gathering amongst friends is encouraged; an indoor party and media room and an outdoor terrace boast luxury resort-like vibes with its sun lounge and bed-size chaises. By night, it becomes the place to plan an al-fresco dinner party or pre-cocktails before a night on the town. “Our boutique approach attracts people who value innovative architecture, functional suite layouts and valuable price points,” says Les Mallins, president of Streetcar Developments. “We’ve always said that the neighbourhoods in which we build are the greatest amenities for our buyer. The Carnaby location is the best amenity an end-user can ask for.” (Starting price: \$200,000)