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NEW IN HOMES & CONDOS

ALEXANDRA PARK

Form and function in harmony

Origami Lofts inspired by intricate Japanese art of paper-folding

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Sayf Hassan is disappointed with what's been happening, or rather not happening, to Bathurst St. north of Queen St.

"South of Queen, you have a decent amount of density on Bathurst, and you have fairly well-scaled, midrise projects of architectural merit," says Hassan, principal of builder Symmetry Developments and a former area resident.

"But as soon as you go north of Queen, Bathurst becomes a bit of a wasteland. It really needs to be rebuilt and revitalized."

That's what Hassan is aiming to do with Origami, an architecturally captivating seven-storey condo with 23 units that he's planning to build at 202 Bathurst, just north of Queen.

As the project's name suggests, Origami, designed by Stephen Teeple — the architect for all of Symmetry's recent Toronto developments — was inspired by the "intricate forms of ancient Japanese paper folding," the sales brochure notes.

Accordingly, the blue zinc cladding that drapes over the building's glass core will feature a series of angular folds and cut-outs. On the top of the building, a setback glass cube will house Origami's four penthouses, all two-storeys.

There will be 1,000 square feet of retail space at the base of the building, just enough room for a single shop, Hassan says.

ORIGAMI continued on H12



Tridel's Ten York will climb to 65 storeys over the city's core.

Tridel's Ten York offers evidence Toronto's condo market is alive and well

Looking up

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Anyone pondering the current state of Toronto's condo market may want to take note of the rip-roaring success of Tridel's recently launched Ten York project.

The 65-storey glass tower — which will rise from a wedge-shaped site at York and Harbour Sts. — has been regarded as a bellwether, a development whose sales performance this fall would offer an indication of the health of a condo market that some analysts believe has become oversupplied.

Of the 600 units at Ten York released to date, 532 had been sold as of early November. If the Toronto condo market is cooling, "you sure as heck wouldn't have known that from what was happening at our sales office," notes Jim Ritchie, Tridel's senior vice-president of sales and marketing.

In all, Ten York will have 694 residences, ranging from 564-square-foot one-bedroom units to 3,858-square-foot three-bedroom suites. Prices start at \$345,000. Occupancy of the project is slated for summer 2017.

Tridel is developing Ten York in partnership with Build Toronto, an independent and self-funding real estate and development corporation with a mandate to maximize the value of under-utilized real estate previously owned by the city.

The development is the first joint residential project on which Build Toronto has partnered with a private builder.

TEN YORK continued on H12

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>> HOMES & CONDOS

Inspired by Japanese art

ORIGAMI from H1

The origami theme continues on the inside, where suite floor plans have been named after traditional origami animals. Options here range from “simple and efficient” (the Camel, a 387-square-foot studio unit with Juliet balcony) to “expansive and proud” (the Crane, a 983-square-foot two-bedroom penthouse with a 130-square-foot terrace).

Origami went on sale in October. Prices start from \$219,900.

The lofts, designed by DKStudio, will have nine-foot ceilings in the principal rooms, pre-finished engineered wood flooring, stacked Energy Star washer and dryer, and a barbecue connection on the balcony or terrace.

Kitchens will have Corian countertops, a mosaic tile backsplash and Energy Star stainless steel fridge, gas cooktop, dishwasher and microwave hood-fan. Bathrooms will have Corian-topped vanities, custom cabinetry and soaker tubs.

Certain suite design elements echo Origami's exterior form. The kitchen island, for example, resembles a sculpture that folds and bends. The pantry door is folded into a dramatic angle, as well.

“What I love about Stephen's (architectural) design and the origami theme is that you can take one sheet of paper or sheet of zinc and cladding, and through the process of bending and folding, actually create a beautiful object,” explains designer Dnytriy Pereklita of DKStudio. “So the idea here was to extrapolate that inside the building.”

“It's rare to get a building that's a whole — a true expression of an idea from start to finish,” Teeple points out.

Paul Johnston, the broker handling sales for the project, credits Hassan for being willing to “push the envelope” on design with Origami and “raise the bar” for Toronto residential architecture.

“It's not much of a risk,” the developer says, standing beside his team of consultants during a recent interview at the Origami sales centre. “The bar is actually extremely low and needs to be raised a bit.”

Origami is aimed at end users who are “sensitive to design and extremely sensitive to livability,” Johnston says, buyers who want to be in the thick of the Queen West action but



Origami will be an architecturally captivating seven-storey condo at 202 Bathurst St.

want nothing to do with a high-rise condo.

“These are not voracious investors of consumer-condo product. These are people who want to live in a great area and in a really cool condo.”

Origami's fine-grain midrise form will help it to fit well within the existing neighbourhood, Teeple notes.

The building is also establishing a standard for the ongoing redevelopment of Bathurst north of Queen.

“It looks to the future,” he says. “The idea is that (Bathurst) will eventually be a street of

similar-height buildings and it would form an avenue, but the buildings themselves could all be different.”

“The nice thing with smaller infill developments (like Origami) is that while you can create the continuity of the street space, you also get smaller developments that each have a different character.

“That enriches the street and makes a downtown better, more livable and more dense. All the right things.”

> Go to origamilofts.com for more information.

ASK JOE

Skip inspection at your own peril

JOE RICHER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Q: My wife and I are considering dropping the home inspection clause from our offer because we want to make it more attractive to the seller, but I am hearing that this can lead to trouble. What should we do?

A: When you have your eye on a home in an active real estate market, it can be tempting to remove the home inspection condition on your offer. But skipping a home inspection has risks and it can lead to trouble.

There's a reason a typical Agreement of Purchase and Sale includes a standard clause with respect to a home inspection; it's there for your protection.

A home inspection can identify hidden situations and potential problems that could turn your dream home into a nightmare.

Carefully consider the risk of future troubles and expensive repairs before you skip an inspection.

For example, we know of a case where an inspection wasn't done and the discovery of problems with the roof meant \$10,000 in additional costs for the buyer.

Given the risk, you might want to ask yourself, “Can I afford not to have an inspection?”

A qualified and experienced home inspector will examine the major systems in the home, including electrical, roofing, plumbing, heating/air conditioning, foundation and septic systems.

The inspector will help you better assess the overall condition of the house and what repairs might be needed.

For more information, check out the home inspection bulletin and the “Do you know what you are buying?” video on the Real Estate Council of Ontario (RECO) website (reco.on.ca).



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 @RECOhelps or on YouTube at youtube.com/recohelps.

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Market in good health

TEN YORK from H1

Suites at Ten York — designed by II BY IV Design Associates — will have nine-foot ceilings and engineered-laminate plank flooring.

Kitchens will have granite or quartz countertops and AEG stainless steel appliances. Bathrooms come with white quartz countertops and five-foot soaker tubs.

Suites include a stacked Energy Star front-loading washer and dryer, and will have individual metering of electricity, hot water and heating/cooling.

Ten York's amenities include a gym and studios for spinning, yoga and cardio; and an outdoor pool, spa and saunas. The building also will have a billiards room, media/games room, theatre room, party room and private dining room, as well as guest suites and a concierge.

BATTLING 'DOOM AND GLOOM'

In spite of Ten York's impressive sales, headlines proclaiming a condo market downturn have created quite a few headaches for Ritchie and his team. “Our biggest challenge is consumer confidence,” he says.

“People read headlines and they don't really understand what's going on, so they just see it as doom and gloom. The more this stuff is written about, the harder it is to convince somebody they should be buying a condo.”

Ritchie acknowledges “we've had challenges in the marketplace over the past few months,” however, he suggests that Ten York's location and design have had a lot to do with the project's success.

“We did a tremendous amount of market research and testing our prospect database (which included more than 5,000 registrants), and it told us that in spite of what you might read in the papers, there were buyers for this in the community.

“Tall buildings in the downtown core with water views are in demand, and I think we've proven that.”

Ten York generated big buzz last fall when preliminary plans for the project were unveiled.

The tower design has since undergone a number of significant changes in response to feedback from the city.

Most significantly, Ten York's height has been reduced to 65 storeys from the originally proposed 75 storeys.

The look of the building has been tweaked, as well, becoming more triangular in form to correspond better with the wedge-shaped site on which it will sit, located between the Gardiner Expressway and the York St. off-ramp at the northwest corner of Harbour and York Sts.



Ten York, at 65 storeys and 224 metres, will become an iconic building in the city.

“(Changing the design of the tower) allowed us also to push the building, including the base, further to the west, which will create wider pedestrian access along York St.,” notes Ritchie.

The tower redesign also saw the parking garage, originally proposed to be above-grade, moved underground, freeing up space in the podium. The base of the building will now feature a glass-enclosed lobby with 30-foot-high ceilings.

“We've created a pretty spectacular lobby space,” says Ten York's architect Rudy Wallman. “Because it's so high and transparent, it will act as an extension of the sidewalk.”

Despite the tower being knocked down from 75 storeys to 65, changes to the form of the building resulted in a negligible reduction in the number of suites, from 774 to 694.

The new building design also minimizes the use of balconies. West-facing suites will have them, as will units on the northeast and southeast corners of the tower, but the north and south facades will be glass curtain walls.

“I think that's a huge bonus visually,” Wallman says. “We don't have to deal with inset or projecting balconies, which really give residential buildings the look they have, which tends to be cluttered if not handled well.

“Here it's going to be very sleek and finished looking, more like a commercial building.”

Ten York is no longer in the running to become one of Toronto's tallest residential towers, but Ritchie maintains the 224-metre building will be iconic all the same.

“When you look at some of the renderings we created, I think it looks pretty darn good at 65 floors.”

“It won't make us the tallest, but we're right up there,” he adds. “And besides, it was never the race to be the tallest. We wanted the right solution for this particular site.”

> For more information, go to tridel.com.