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Bryan Baeumler

Readers ask about bathtubs, floors and warmer attics, **H2**

NEW IN

HOMES & CONDOS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2016

SECTION H

CE ON2

Life at the city's highest home address

Penthouses at Aura at College Park make the claim to fame of being the tallest of the tall

ELAINE SMITH

SPECIAL TO THE STAR

On foggy nights, the lights atop downtown Toronto skyscraper condo Aura seem to hover in space like extra-terrestrial visitors.

The distinctive pattern, using 1.24 kilometres of LED lights that shine through the night's dark hours, ensures that North America's tallest residential tower is recognizable from the edges of the GTA. And further.

"I've had friends call me from Victoria Park to say, 'Hey, I can see your building from here,' " said Nicolas Lin, 33, who bought his 870-square-foot condo on the ninth floor for \$570,000.

Aura is the final building in the College Park development, at the northwest corner of Gerrard and Yonge Sts., and the last of its 994 condos — the 79th-floor penthouses — are now for sale, ranging in price up to \$3.7 million. The building's record height was not part of the original planning, said Berardo Graziani, principal at Graziani + Corazza Architects Inc. of Mississauga. The site was initially slated to be home to two towers, but after examining the feasibility, the impact and the marketing of two towers, the architects and developers, Canderel Residential, decided that a single tower would have less impact

"It's exciting to have the tallest residential building, but I'm most satisfied by the positive things it has done for the city by opening up Yonge St.," Graziani said. "Now, Yonge St. is full of development and is being revitalized. Who knows how long this will be the tallest residential building?"

The projects have also brought new retail life to a failing stretch of what was once listed as the world's longest street (until 1999, when it was separated from Hwy. 11 at Barrie) with shops and cafés, plus an additional supermarket to meet the needs of the influx of new residents.

Canderel, the building's developer, broke ground for the project in 2010, and the five-storey retail podium opened in 2012. The first residents moved into the building in August 2013. Aura's 994 units, covering a million square feet of living



RICK MADONIK/TORONTO STAR

A sweeping view of the city skyline and Lake Ontario is among the highlights of the penthouses at Aura. Left, Julie Robinson, director of project management and construction for the building's developer, Canderel Residential, and Aura condo owner Nicolas Lin.

space, touch all sectors of the market, Graziani said, with studios, lofts and two-storey units among the other offerings.


The construction of the building, the fourth tallest building in Canada — with only First Canadian Place, Trump International Hotel and Tower, and Scotia Plaza ahead of it — was an exercise in problem-solving since it was done in three phases. Essentially, Aura is three buildings stacked one on top of another. The retail podium was built first, followed by floors six to 58; the upper stories formed the third building. Each phase has separate elevators.

"It was interesting, exciting and challenging," said Julie Robinson, the director of project management and construction for Canderel's residential group.

"The retail podium had a different end user than the residential floors, and the commercial tenants were very sensitive to the need for the storefronts to appear open during construction. Instead of ground-level hoardings, we had overhead protection to achieve that open-for-business look.

"We had many structural challenges, including rebuilding and maintaining a ramp to service the entire block and providing 24-hour access and using a transfer slab eight-feet deep that allowed us to continue construction despite the podium being open. We were essentially building a vertical world."

Graziani said the team was regularly breaking new ground, figuratively speaking.



North America's tallest residential building, Aura, is recognizable from the edges of the GTA and further due to its LED lights that shine through the night's dark hours.

AURA continued on **H6**





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>> HOMES & CONDOS

> WHAT THEY GOT
CONDOS



Etobicoke
Location: 245 Dalesford Rd., Unit T15, Park Lawn Rd. and the Queensway
Asking price: \$319,000
Selling price: \$310,000
Previous selling price: \$265,000 (2008)
Size: About 720 square feet
Parking: One owned underground space, no locker
Maintenance fees: \$381.51 per month
Taxes: \$1,800 (2014)
Bedrooms: 1 plus 1
Bathrooms: 1
Days on the market: 38
Situating on a cul-de-sac in a midrise building, this condo unit took just over a month to sell for 97 per cent of what was asked.

“This is a great unit and affordably priced for first-time buyers,” says listing agent Irene Kaushansky. “The building is surrounded by green space, with a rooftop deck and garden. The unit features a walkout to an east-facing balcony from the living room, with a treetop and skyline view. It also boasts a spacious den, ideal as a home office or guest bedroom.”

The building has easy access to the Gardiner Expressway, is just steps away from a park, and close to Park Lawn Rd. and the Queensway, where there is shopping and places to eat.

Amenities in the building include an exercise room, a party/meeting room and visitor parking.

Unit has: den, living room and dining room with laminate floor; open-concept kitchen with breakfast bar, walk-in pantry and granite counters; master bedroom with broadloom floor and large closet; four-piece bathroom.

Listing agents: Irene Kaushansky and Philip Brown, Keller Williams Neighbourhood Realty, Brokerage, 416-236-1392; ireneandphilip.com



Swansea
Location: 1900 Lake Shore Blvd. W., Unit 1707, Ellis Ave. and Lake Shore Blvd. W.
Asking price: \$376,900
Selling price: \$370,000
Previous selling price: \$297,958 (2011)
Size: More than 800 square feet
Parking: one exclusive underground space, no locker
Maintenance fees: \$621.28 per month
Taxes: \$2,458 (2015)
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 2
Days on the market: 1

Located in south Swansea, overlooking Lake Ontario, this condo unit was on the market for only one day before it sold for 98 per cent of the asking price.

“Every window in this luxury condo suite faces the water. It features a two-bedroom, two-bathroom split-floor plan and is fresh and modern, with black and pearl granite counters, a large laundry room, large closets, high ceilings throughout, and a walk-in closet in the master bedroom. Close to High Park, this suite also has views of Grenadier Pond,” says listing agent Mary Semen.

The highrise building has easy access to the Gardiner Expressway and is a short walk to Lake Ontario, the boardwalk and Martin Goodman Trail.

Building amenities are a concierge, a gym, a party/meeting room, a security guard and visitor parking.

Unit has: foyer with ceramic-tile floor and closet; living room with hardwood floor and walkout to balcony; dining room with hardwood floor; kitchen with breakfast bar; master bedroom with hardwood floor and four-piece bathroom; second bedroom with double closet and hardwood floor.

Listing agent: Mary Semen, Sutton Group Realty Systems Inc., Brokerage, 905-896-3333; suttonrealty.com
Compiled by Allison Harness from information that is publicly available. Send recent homes sales to **sold-home@rogers.com**. Not all submissions can be used.



BRETT BUNDLOCK/TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

It took developer Canderel Residential close to five years to build the Aura condominium tower at Yonge and Gerrard Sts.

Project keeps breaking new ground

AURA from H1

> AURA BY THE NUMBERS

1.24

Kilometres of lights adorning Aura's crown

1.65

Millions of square feet of residential, retail, amenity and parking spaces

2

Number of postal codes covered by the building

3.5

Number of years to complete concrete and rebar placement

4.5

Number of years under construction

21

Number of elevators in the building

55

Number of trades that contributed to construction

273

Height of the building in metres

645

Cost of the project, in millions of dollars

10,000

Metric tons of rebar shipped to site, the equivalent of 4,400 cars

83,000

Metres of concrete poured

300,000

Weight, in pounds, of the steel forming the building's crown

Source: Canderel

after retail condo owners in the lower level say they were misled by promises of a PATH connection that would give them access to shoppers. The allegations have not been proven in court.

Aura's five-storey podium includes retailers Marshall's, Bed Bath & Beyond. As well, it has the largest location of Madonna's Hard Candy Fitness chain where all Aura residents receive free memberships.

“I love the fitness centre,” Lin said. “It's amazing.”

Manryk agreed. “The equipment is amazing and there's anything you want: a Booster Juice bar, hot yoga, and it's all included.”

Aura's own amenities appeal to buyers and owners: a cyber café; a mini-theatre that can be rented for private events; party rooms; guest suites; and a fifth-floor outdoor patio with barbecues and a waterfall.

Online forums allow Aura residents to leave notes for the concierge and report repairs online; as well it's a marketplace to sell unwanted possessions. Residents' key fobs give them access to common areas and their own residential floors — an added layer of security.

“The amenities make a big difference, a very prestigious difference,” Manryk said. “I like the luxury, too.”

Yonge, Gerrard, Bay and College Sts. The three-acre park is the focus of a \$3-million re-make by the developer.

Aura connects to the TTC's subway system. “I've worn heels in a snowstorm to go to a concert at Roy Thomson Hall,” Manryk said, refer-

ring to the building's underground connection to College subway station, which allows residents to take the TTC without walking outdoors.

But a proposed link to the city's underground PATH system is in dispute and a lawsuit has been launched

DUBAI CLAIMS THE WORLD'S TALLEST ALL-RESIDENTIAL HIGHRISES

ELAINE SMITH
STAR TOUCH

1. Princess Tower: 101 floors
 2. 23 Marina: 88 floors
 3. Burj Mohammed Bin Rashid: 88 floors
 4. Elite Residence: 87 floors
 5. The Torch: 86 floors
- Source: Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (ctubh.org)



DREAMSTIME

The Princess Tower, at centre left, stands tallest among her royal family of the world's tallest residences.

> CONDO LAW



Gerry Hyman

Romantic relationship could create board conflict

There is a rumour that one of our board members and our superintendent are in an amorous relationship. Does that create a conflict for the board member in voting on matters that would affect the superintendent?

If a matter such as the renewal of the superintendent's contract comes before the board for a vote, and if the board determines that the amorous relationship exists and constitutes a material direct or indirect interest of the director in the contract extension — which is questionable — the

director must disclose the situation. This must be done at the meeting when the contract is first considered. The director cannot be present when the board discusses the contract.

Our management company has pretty much hijacked our board of directors, to the extent that the manager runs the corporation's affairs. The manager now insists on first receiving all communications intended for the directors from condo owners. But the messages do not reach the board. What can we do?

The Condominium Act specifies that the board shall manage the affairs of the corporation. The manager's role is to advise the board and to carry out its instructions.

The directors should be advised that, in failing to manage the corporation, they are in breach of the act and in breach of the requirement that they act honestly and in good faith.

If the board fails to take steps to rectify the situation, a unit owner could make a court application under section 134 of the condo act re-

questing an order requiring the board to take such steps. Alternatively an owner could make a court application for the appointment of an administrator under section 131 of the act for the purpose of reclaiming the management of the corporation.

A further possibility would be for at least 15 per cent of the owners to requisition an owners' meeting for a vote on the removal of those directors who are not willing to reestablish the board's management authority. Removal of a director requires an affirmative vote of owners of more than 50 per cent of the units.

Our condo corporation has a mortgage, but the budget prepared by the board only reflects the interest payments. Our audited financial statements will show principal and interest payments of \$120,000 for the current year, but the budget will show only the interest portion of approximately one-half of that amount. Is this satisfactory?

The budget should show both the principal and interest payments. The common-expense contributions col-

lected from the owners will likely be insufficient to meet the corporation's financial obligations if the contributions are based on a budget which does not correctly show the total obligation.

If reserve fund expenditures diminish the fund to an amount that is less than the amount required, as indicated by the reserve fund study, should the deficiency be made up by a special assessment or by an increase in future common expense contributions? Can special assessments be paid in a number of annual installments?

The deficiency can be made up either by a special assessment or by a common-expense contribution increase provided that the latter method will produce the funds necessary to meet expected reserve-fund expenditures when required.

Lawyer Gerry Hyman is a former president of the Canadian Condominium Institute and author of Condominium Handbook. Send questions to **gerry@gerryhyman.com** or fax to his attention at 416-925-8492.