

King of the unsightly

Cluttered look plagues building

By **TIM KOCUR**
for Metro Toronto

If you thought you were alone in cringing at Toronto's recent condominium developments, you've got company.

Some in the industry frown at some developments, including Brad J. Lamb, the president of Brad J. Lamb Realty Inc.

"Developers need to decide," he says. "Do we improve the city or just make money?"

"The buildings are here forever. There can be a group of beautiful buildings and one ugly condominium can completely ruin it."

He singles out one building as the worst in the city — 1000 King Street West, developed a few years ago.

The building has a cluttered appearance as it uses numerous materials in combination. No more than three are needed for a "light, simple and clean" look, according to Lamb.

Lamb says the building also has small balconies, poor retail with bad visibility at street level, and small "punch-out" windows that are no longer necessary in an era when technology allows for the maximization of glass walls.

"The main problem is a lack of knowledge about architecture, money grubbing, and a lack of regulation to stop it," Lamb says.

An average condominium development of \$50 million will spend about \$400,000 to \$800,000 on architecture, Lamb says. If a developer



Brad J. Lamb, president of Brad J. Lamb Realty Inc., considers this 1000 King Street West condo building one of the ugliest in the city.

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goes cheap, they stand to increase their profits significantly, at the expense of architectural integrity.

The situation is getting better though.

Charles Gane is a partner with CORE Architects and he sees a rise in the demand for better architecture.

"The new downtown hipper developers are doing good work," he says. "The older guys are dinosaurs who keep building the same thing.

"They'll have to change or adapt to the new style or they'll die because the demands of the public are im-

proving," Gane says.

Toronto real estate agent Todd Black of Sutton Group Associates says he doesn't get a lot of complaints about condos being ugly, however, he does hear complaints about "cookie-cutter designs" and a lack of individualism with new projects.

"When a unique condo design comes on the market, it does sell really quickly," Black says. "It's quite true that they're getting better. We're seeing better detail and they're more appealing."

If Lamb, Gane and Black are all correct in their optimism about better design,

appearances

● Here are the six ugliest condominiums in Toronto, according to Brad J. Lamb, president of Brad J. Lamb Realty Inc.

1. 1000 King St. W
2. 18 Stafford St.
3. 109 Front St. E. "New Times Square."
4. 500 Richmond St. W. "Cityscape Terrace"
5. 550 Front St. W.
6. 330 Adelaide St. E.

future buyers looking to the sky will hopefully do a lot less cringing in the future.