

Architect's trio of condos reshapes street

Modern design taking over on tiny Stewart St.

Sales office for latest project opens today

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Thanks to three new condominium buildings on a small one-way street, architect Charles Gane is creating a pocket of modern design in downtown Toronto.

In the space of five years, a trio of mid-rise condominiums will have been built on Stewart St., which runs from Bathurst to Portland Sts., a block south of King St. W.

Gane is the principal architect for all three and each features the sleek and minimalist styling of modern design and architecture.

"You could call it a unique opportunity where one architect, over the course of a few years, gets to design three different buildings beside each other," says Gane, a partner with Core Architects Inc.

Construction of the first building, called 32 Stewart, was completed three years ago. The second, 66 Portland, is now under construction at the intersection of Stewart and Portland Sts.

Sales for the third building, 20 Stewart, launch today.

"They all have a similar design vocabulary, but they use slightly different materials and forms. I think they'll read as a whole," Gane says.

"Each building is similar in terms of the modernism they are projecting — a lot of glass and minimalist in terms of frills on the outside," says Brad Lamb, whose company, Brad J. Lamb Realty Inc., is handling marketing and real estate sales for 20 Stewart.

"There's no baubles on this building," says Lamb of 20 Stewart, which he describes as a "boutique, high-end design, infill project."

The most obvious modern-design feature of 20 Stewart will be a large sheet of glass covering much of the nine-storey building's front exterior.

Set in an aluminum frame, the six-inch-thick glass plate will have different shades of glass arranged in a random pattern. The different colours will create changing visual effects as the light hitting the building changes during the course of a day.

"It's clipped on the outside of the building. It's one huge, glass rectangle just suspended out there, hanging in front of the building," Gane says. "The idea was to give residents an iconic image of their building — something they can identify with and say: 'I'm in the building with the glass curtain hanging out front.'"

In the last nine years, Lamb and his company have handled sales and marketing for nine condo projects in the area bounded by Queen St. W., Spadina Ave., Front St. W. and Bathurst St.

Lamb says the area is characterized by smaller projects, typically with fewer than 100 units — a direct result of city zoning policies which largely limit new-building heights to about 28 metres, or nine storeys.

The city had a specific reason for capping building heights in the district, says Sharon Hill, a senior planner with the city's urban development services department.

"It's intended to respect the historical built-form of the area," Hill says. "The planning thinking for the area was changed back in 1996. The whole notion was to basically help this area evolve into a vibrant, mixed-use

district for the city."

Since then, Lamb says, the area has evolved into one with a distinct identity as an inner-city village, largely drawing its character from the many early 20th-century brick-and-beam buildings still standing in the neighbourhood. He also says it's an area where many condo buyers have an appreciation for modern design.

20 Stewart is a co-development between Freed Developments and Lash Development Corp.

There are 59 units in the building, from one bedroom to two bedrooms, with and without dens. Units range from 520 square feet to 1,300 square feet, for \$162,900 to \$1.35 million for a lone three-bedroom-penthouse unit of 2,800 square feet, which will occupy the entire top floor.

Standard in all units will be 10-foot, exposed concrete ceilings, floor-to-ceiling windows, balconies or terraces with built-in gas lines for barbecues, hardwood floors throughout, granite countertops in kitchens and stainless-steel kitchen appliances.

Marble bathroom vanities will be custom-designed by interior design firm Ciccone Simone Inc.

Because 20 Stewart will have few amenities, Lamb estimates monthly maintenance fees will be 31 to 33 cents per square foot.

The sales office opens today and is across the street from the site. Hours are weekends from noon to 5 p.m., Monday to Wednesday from noon to 6 p.m. and Thursday from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Register for preview appointments at 416-603-6166 or www.20stewart.ca.



The large sheet of glass covering much of 20 Stewart's front is intended "to give residents an iconic image of their building," says architect Charles Gane, who also designed two other buildings on the street near King and Bathurst.