

HOMES & CONDOS

WEST QUEEN WEST

Gladstone poised for a residential renaissance

Elimination of the Dufferin jog improves the neighbourhood's access and livability

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Gladstone just north of Queen used to function as a Dufferin detour, an alternate route for drivers prevented by railroad tracks from continuing up Dufferin. It was known as the Dufferin jog.

The elimination of the problem last fall — Dufferin St. now runs through an underpass beneath the tracks — has improved life on Gladstone Ave. considerably.

"It has really changed the dynamic of street," says Prishram Jain, the architect who designed 8 Gladstone, an eight-storey, 86-suite condo to be built across the road from the Gladstone Hotel.

"No longer are there big buses turning and a lot of traffic going up and down that jog. Now Gladstone can be reclaimed as a residential street."

Units at 8 Gladstone — which is being built by Streetcar Developments — range from 471 square feet to 1,207 square feet, with prices starting in the mid \$200,000s.

The project is currently in the pre-registration phase and is slated to go on sale in early June.

Two-storey penthouses will be located on the building's top two floors, with a setback on the seventh storey creating space for a spacious terrace.

The penthouses range in size from 705 square feet (two bedroom) to 1,207 square feet (two bedroom plus den). The largest units on the east-facing side of the building will

enjoy unobstructed views of the downtown skyline (and terraces that are nearly the size of their condo).

Smaller penthouses will have skylights, allowing for bedrooms to be located in the rear portion of the suite. All penthouses will have 10-foot ceilings.

Suites on 8 Gladstone's lower floors — ranging from one-bedroom to two-bedroom plus den units — will have balconies or terraces and nine-foot ceilings.

Jain, a principal with TACT Architecture, notes that the city is planning on making significant improvements along Gladstone to enhance the street's newfound sense of calm.

"They're widening the boulevard and narrowing the road and it will become a one-way going north (of the site)," he says. "They'll also be planting a lot of trees."

TACT designed 8 Gladstone's sister project, 2 Gladstone, an eight-storey, 54-unit building that's under construction next door (occupancy is expected this fall).

The buildings aren't identical — they're sisters, not twins, Jain stresses — but they will have matching cornice lines and set-backs at the seventh floor, resulting in architectural consistency along the west side of Gladstone.

In a nod to the area's heritage architecture, the design of the two Gladstone buildings makes "specific references" to the Romanesque style of the Gladstone Hotel, he



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says.

"We took the proportions and rhythms of the hotel and adopted, updated and modernized them."

Both 2 Gladstone and 8 Gladstone are being built by Streetcar, a Toronto firm that specializes in mid-rise, infill projects.

The company, which until Gladstone focused primarily in the city's east end, prides itself on developments that "really fit into the neighbourhood context," says Jeanhy Shim, Streetcar's vice-president of sales and marketing.

(Streetcar isn't just some cute company name, it actually means something: "All our projects to date have been on the streetcar line," Shim says.)

Suite interiors and common areas at 8 Gladstone have been designed by II BY IV Design Associates.

The look of the spaces will be in keeping with Streetcar's preferred style: "modern, clean lines, nothing cluttered, very contemporary," Shim says.

The suites will boast certain unique elements, notes Dan Men-

chions, a principal with II BY IV.

"This is the first time we've used porcelain tile throughout in residential suites," he says. "Most developers use wood floors or engineered wood flooring. So we're very excited about this."

Kitchens will have appliances fully integrated into panelling. "Because the kitchens are open concept, we design it like a piece of furniture," says Shim. The kitchens will also have quartz countertops and undermount sinks.

The developer has "given more real estate to the bathrooms" at 8 Gladstone, Shim notes, with walk-in showers, vanities that incorporate drawers and shelves, and five-foot wide quartz countertops. In units that have only one bathroom there will be powder rooms.

There will be a large multi-purpose room on the second floor ("we'll probably equip it as a gym," Shim says), and a "pet spa" on the ground floor.

There will be about 8,000 square feet of retail space at the base of 8 Gladstone, some of which will be

located along a laneway that runs between and behind the two Gladstone buildings.

While no tenant has been secured yet, Shim has a good idea of what might work well there: a bank. "There really aren't bank machines along that whole stretch (of Queen St.)," she says.

Considering the neighbourhood's artsy aesthetic, the ground-level space could be well suited for gallery space or offices for an architect, graphic designer or other creative types, the developer says.

Those arts community ties are already being nurtured. Streetcar has invited local artists to create installations for the project's model suites and the company has reached out to the local business improvement association to offer up the use of 8 Gladstone's sales centre for galleries and events.

"We really want to reflect the Queen West neighbourhood with our project," Shim says.

Go to www.8gladstone.com or call 416-690-2988 for more information.

NEWMARKET

Streets radiate out from a central park

JANICE BRADBEER
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Copper Hills Phase II is in an urban location, yet has the feel of a rural setting, says Janice Robinson, vice-president of planning and development with the Preston Group.

"The development features generous lots on quiet lanes, a large community park and school at its centre, ponds, walkways and green space," she says.

Phase II offers 200 single-detached homes on 45-, 50- and 52-foot lots. The four-bedroom homes, with brick interiors with stone and stucco accents, range from 2,355 to 3,540 square feet and are priced from \$579,900 to \$686,900. Some models feature a loft room.

Copper Hills' master plan is set on 55 hectares (135 acres), with streets and avenues that radiate out like spokes from the park that lies at the hub and is a short stroll from every home.

The Preston Group has more than 40 years of residential construction experience and is also developing the 25-storey Blade Condominium atop the facade of Brampton's former Dominion Skate factory.

Sales of Copper Hills Phase II started earlier this year and closing dates range from two months for inventory homes to one year for homes selected from plans. The 100 homes in Phase I were completed in 2009 and there are another 341 lots in future phases, says Robinson.

Jardin Design Group Inc. is the design architect for the homes. Interiors have a modern, traditional theme, including coffered ceilings in the living and dining rooms, granite counters and oak hardwood flooring on the main level. Other standards include nine-foot ceilings on the main floor, ceramic tiles on floors in the foyer, bathrooms, kitchen and laundry room, and a natural finish oak staircase.

Public and private schools are nearby and the Magna Centre, a state-of-the-art recreation and leisure complex, is around the corner. It features a 25-metre indoor pool, 21-metre learning pool, running track, gym, plus one Olympic and three NHL-sized ice rinks.

Dozens of public and private golf courses are within a short drive. For outdoor enthusiasts, the Tom Taylor Trail, part of the Nokiidaa recreational trail system, winds through Newmarket as it follows the Holland River. "It provides a great way to see the town's natural environment," says Robinson.

Copper Hills Phase II sales centre is at 1030 Poppy Lane, at Leslie St. and Stonehaven Ave. Hours are Monday to Wednesday, 1 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; closed Thursdays and Fridays. Go to www.prestongroup.ca or 905-954-4050 for more information.



Inside one of the model homes at the Preston Group's Copper Hills development in Newmarket.



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