

HALLOWEEN
BOO-TIFUL BOOTY
STENCILLED
OR CERAMIC
WHITE PUMPKINS
ARE A CHIC CHOICE



For those whose sensibilities sway away from plastic pumpkins on Halloween, we suggest a visit to Martha Stewart’s website. Throwing a party? Martha suggests using a pumpkin as an ice bucket: “Choose a large, wide pumpkin, cut off the top third with a serrated knife or keyhole saw, and scrape out the pulp and seeds. Line the gourd with a glass or plastic bowl to prevent it from becoming waterlogged. If the pumpkin opening is too small for the bowl, shave the inside edge with a spoon. Finish by filling the bowl with ice and bottled drinks.” Other ideas: Add glitter to a pumpkin using a glue gun, or cover plastic skulls and hand bones in glitter, place them under a clear cake stand, and presto!, fabulously freaky seasonal centrepiece. You could also order a white ceramic pumpkin, pictured on Martha’s site through Grandinroad.com, or paint your own. *National Post*



RAW
POWER

Searching
for a new condo
in a gritty
industrial
'hood? This
Leslieville
street gives
you both
*By Alex
Newman*

The times they are a changin’ along Carlaw Avenue. Originally a working-class neighbourhood with a score of industrial sites — Wrigley’s, Colgate’s, Wood’s and a host of garment factories — it was said you could find a job just by walking up the street.

But with the manufacturing sector’s demise, the warehouses fell empty, and the narrow rowhouses on adjacent streets started filling with a “lot of multi-family arrangements,” according to Paul Young, who co-authored a 2000 study of the area.

In the late 1990s, however, several things came together at once. Jack Layton was councillor of the Don River ward, Jane Jacobs was vocal about strengthening neighbourhoods, and the city had started receiving a trickle of applications to turn buildings into legitimate live/work spaces.

Resurrecting this neighbourhood, though, meant finding a common focus among the mix of residents — high tech and media arts professionals along with a sizable working-class population.

Naturally, the buildings played a role. “It was an old industrial pocket but the buildings are handsome, and made it quite a desirable area,” especially for people in Toronto’s burgeoning film industry, says urban planner Denise Graham.

It was also the dawning of legitimate live-work situations for creative types who liked the raw space, big windows and high ceilings. And housing was stable — you couldn’t get kicked out for living in your work space.

When the study came out in 2000 — overseen by Mr Layton — it became a development touchstone. It identified neighbourhood deficiencies such as dimmer-than-average streetlights, and made recommendations about landscaping, parks, public art, heritage preservation, connections to the waterfront and how to improve the livability of Dundas Street.

For developers, the area presented an opportunity. When loft development began on Carlaw, “nobody really knew about the area,” says Brad Lamb, who has marketed two developments (Garment Factory at 233 Carlaw and Printing Factory at 201) and developed two others (Work Lofts at 319 and Flatiron Lofts at 1201 Dundas). “It was dead and scruffy-looking, but a lot of people looking for authentic lofts liked the idea of a new-found area.”

That’s when land there sold for \$16 to \$18 a buildable square foot; prices have now

tripled to \$40 to \$50 per buildable square foot (still low compared to \$125/sq. ft. in Yorkville and \$80 at King and Cortland).

And with unit prices rising correspondingly — \$500/sq. ft. compared to the original \$310/sq. ft. — the area inhabitants have changed. Mr. Young recently examined growth patterns for a park process he was facilitating, and found dog ownership was up while birth rates were down. The findings jibed with what he noticed was selling: “a lot of bachelors and one bedrooms ... to buyers who are mostly single.”

That’s not exactly news, but it did raise questions about how the neighbourhood was changing, and whether it was still affordable. But affordability is a complicated issue and depends on land costs, finishes and unit size. While earlier developments benefited from cheap land, they got fewer breaks on height and density.

The neighbourhood was a mix of mid-rise industrial and two-storey residential, so new construction was meant to be a buffer. Although the height limit on Carlaw is 18 meters, or about six storeys, developers have successfully appealed for increases — the Flatiron Lofts, for example, is 11 storeys on Carlaw and 10 on Dundas. And on the north side of Dundas, The Carlaw will have 10 storeys on Dundas and 12 on Carlaw, plus a row of townhomes along Boston (they’re launching in a subsequent phase).

The changes in density and height allowance indicate to Mr. Lamb that the “area is due to intensify.” Given the available industrial land, the pressing need for housing and the city’s directive for intensification, he anticipates the next buildings may be higher still.

But the city wants something in return. When Mr. Lamb first bought on Carlaw, he says he was told by councillor Paula Fletcher that these were “employment lands, and we’re not crazy about condos, so you have to offer employment back to the city.”

With the area’s job base changing — Mr. Lamb believes the notion of an artist population is false — most of the newer projects must include an employment component. The second floors at Worklofts and Flatiron Lofts, for example, have business centres with boardrooms and washrooms. And from what he’s seen, the buyers are not artists, but dentists, lawyers, media types and small businesses.

Though Flatiron has almost sold out its 80 suites, about 35% of raw commercial space is left. It’s not expected to last,

especially in the 400 to 500-sq.-ft. range, Mr. Lamb says, because there’s a “huge market for small-business space.”

With so much change afoot, there’s a feeling of excitement. And design reflects this, especially with the level of design skill seen in the new buildings, by architects skilled in grafting modern skins — of glass, brick and steel — on to older industrial brick bodies.

The Carlaw is grounded with brick at both Carlaw and Dundas ends. Using brick, explains Prish Jain, the building’s architect, “is meant to speak to the industrial heritage of that neighbourhood, speak to the existing character.”

The building’s large expanses of glass also “look forward and upward and be the urban building that it is,” Mr. Jain adds. “It’s not enough to suggest historic, you also need to look forward by using modern materials, like the glass curtain wall facing downtown.”

“The buyers are not artists, but dentists, lawyers and media types”

Across the street at the Flatiron Lofts, Core Architects was hired to deal with the “strange” jogging intersection at Dundas and Carlaw. Their concept — a modern take on the flat iron — was to accommodate the pie-shaped lot (a former gas station) as well as the intersection.

The Printing Factory Lofts (at Queen and Carlaw) took a preservation approach, resurrecting the warehouse by retaining its original height at street level, and inserting a new-build mid-rise condo into the middle. At the Garment Factory Lofts, authentic loft spaces with concrete floors and huge windows comprise the original four floors, but the top four floors are new with glass, steel and brick.

Worklofts, a new-build warehouse, has four floors in grey-purple American brick meant to blend with the street’s industrial look, while the upper seven floors — stepped back — are a lighter glass and aluminum.

Design can also foster more street-level presence. Although much has changed since the 2000 study, its design recommendations are still motivating developers.

Streetercar CEO Les Malen, for example, was inspired to create an 11,000-sq.-ft. public lobby



From top, home of the Carlaw condos; the new Flat Iron Lofts, left, next to the authentic Wrigley Lofts. New Leslieville condos loom over the area’s industrial past. **DARREN CALABRESE / NATIONAL POST**

and courtyard at The Carlaw in an attempt to relate to the street, and encourage greater community engagement.

Mr. Malen is currently in negotiations with groups who will take responsibility for the public space. The ideas for its use are endless: community events such as fashions shows or art exhibits; seasonal re-

tail — the pop-up trend — for Halloween costumes, or winter sporting goods; an inside farmers market — like the St. Lawrence Market — but with the option of spilling outside into the courtyard.

The concept, says Mr. Malen, is not “unusual downtown, but it is for the east end.” *National Post*