

CONDO LIVING

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Riverside revival is true to its past

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Heading east over the Queen Street Bridge from Toronto's downtown, you will be greeted by the Riverside community, the gateway to Toronto's east end. Tucked in between Leslieville and Carlaw, this eclectic little community of heritage buildings, shops and cafes is about to undergo a major transformation.

Streetcar Developments is no stranger to the east end. With their corporate offices located in Riverside, they've been active in this community for over six years. They have big plans for Riverside Square, a section of underutilized industrial lands south of Queen Street. The property is currently occupied by a Toyota dealership and old warehouses in what constitutes a hole in the urban fabric of the Riverside neighbourhood.

The six-year project will consist of a master-planned collection of buildings between Broadview and the Don Valley. First of several planned

residences, the condominium tower will feature dramatic glass window walls and dynamic angles. Innovative green roofs will integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood, while reflecting an environmentally sustainable design.

Riverside Square is based on an open-concept public plaza with wide pedestrian promenades dotted with greenery. The condo will anchor an assortment of restaurants and retail shops as well as a supermarket. "We like



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to look at the pedestrian realm and the at-grade uses to really see how that can drive the character of the development," says Les Mallins, principal of Streetcar Developments.

Streetcar Developments is a different kind of developer. Their design philosophy is to respect the historic look and

feel of the area while providing a glimpse into what could be. "We look at the people surrounding the site and put yourself in their shoes and consider the impact on others and then we take a ground-up approach," says Mallins.

The company has made its mark in the east end with various residential projects. "People know that we believe in the neighbourhood," says Mallins. "We're dedicated to the neighbourhood and that we don't want inappropriate

developments anymore than other members of the community would. We reach out of the early stages, we share our plans and we take input."

Project architect Roland Rom Colthoff of RAW Design says that this is Streetcar's largest project to date and will create an entire new community from the neglected, four-acre strip of land along the Don Valley. "This whole new street system is being incorporated here, so we're cracking open

a formerly industrial area and turning it into part of the urban landscape, part of the city and creating a whole new neighbourhood."

Directly to the south of the project is a city-owned section of green space circled by the Eastern Avenue off-ramp. Streetcar would like to see this turned into a community park. The Riverside project would see the creation of a network of links; a pedestrian walkway and bike path that runs from



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"We look at people surrounding the site and consider the impact on others and then we take a ground-up approach," says Streetcar's Les Mallins of the revitalization effort.



Streetcar's acquisition of the Broadview Hotel on Queen St. is another aspect of the revitalization.

the north side of Queen Street all the way to the West Don Lands.

"That would take you in through the underpass into that forgotten roundabout area which comes off of Eastern Avenue. From that you can hook on to the whole pedestrian system and cross over to the Corktown Commons. So all these linkages for pedestrians make this an incredibly rich project," says Rom Colthoff.

Streetcar's acquisition of the Broadview Hotel on Queen Street is another aspect of the Riverside revitalization. According to Rom Colthoff, plans are underway to restore the historic landmark to its former glory, including the possibility of a rooftop restaurant and a street-level cafe as well as a 50-room boutique hotel. "That would be real complement to the area, to the people that live there."