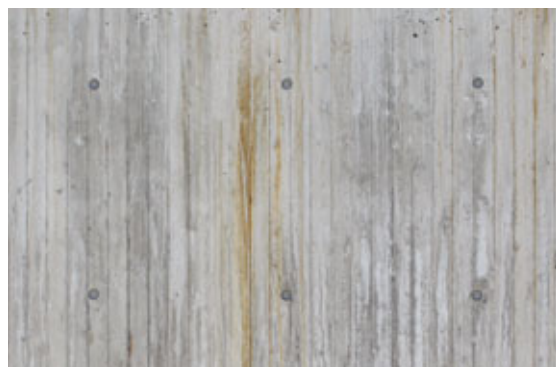
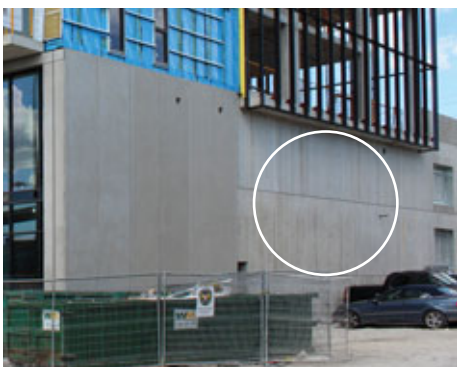


**URBAN CAPITAL MAGAZINE**

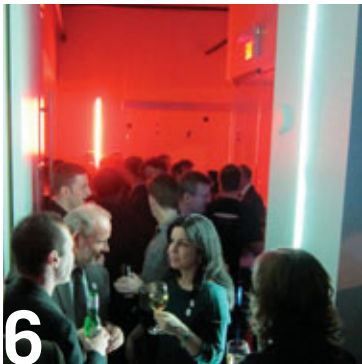
**CONCRETE  
ARCHITECTURE**  
**BIRTH OF A (GARDEN) CITY**  
**URBAN CAPITAL IN 2012**

**+** **TRENDS IN DESIGN 2**  
**BIG BUILDINGS ON SMALL SITES**  
**VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY**



**Cover** Close-up of board-formed concrete at River City Phase 1, designed by Montreal-based Saucier + Perrotte Architectes.

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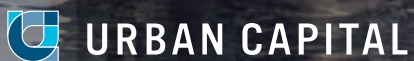


# Unlike anything else...

The first residential development on Toronto's new waterfront, River City is designed by Montreal-based Saucier+Perrotte to look unlike anything else. LEED Gold, carbon neutral, and surrounded by some of the city's most spectacular urban parks, it is Toronto's groundbreaker for the twenty-first century.

**FROM THE MID \$200s**

PHASE THREE:  
**COMING NEXT**



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PHASE ONE:  
**NOW OCCUPYING**

PHASE TWO:  
**NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

river  city

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2010 BILD AWARD  
BEST BUILDING DESIGN

Welcome to our second annual Urban Capital Magazine, our record of what we've been up to, what's been happening around us, and what's influenced us over the past year.

We spent 2012 principally executing projects we launched over the previous two years. So we had **River City**, **Tableau**, **Nicholas** and **Trinity Towns** under construction in Toronto, and **Central Phase 1** (which we completed this past summer) and **Central Phase 2** under construction in Ottawa. In 2013 we will complete River City Phase 1, Trinity Towns and Central Phase 2, while Tableau and Nicholas, large projects with 5 levels of below-grade parking, will pop their heads above ground. We will also start construction of **Hideaway** in Ottawa and **River City Phase 2** in Toronto.

We also spent last year starting to look for new development opportunities outside our two key markets – Toronto and Ottawa. To date we have focused our efforts on **Halifax**, where we have been shortlisted for a large city-owned development site, and **Winnipeg**, where we are launching **Glasshouse**, a 170 unit residential tower that is part of the large mixed-use Centrepoint development. At the same time, we've started to explore additional in-fill development opportunities in the Toronto market, building on our experience with the highly successful Trinity Towns project.

There are of course more details of what we've been up to in the pages that follow, including **Birth of a (Garden) City** on Page 32, which looks, in the context of the Garden City movement, at the design and planning process we led to develop a 16 acre site in downtown Mississauga, and **High Rise Design Goes Low** on Page 36, where we explore, through the eyes of our designers, the fusing of high-rise design sensibilities into a low rise townhouse context.

Like last year, we also look at design-related items that are more tangential to our actual projects. So starting on Page 12 we recap our **2012 Trends in Design** series, which featured furniture designer David Podsiadlo, graphic designer Roderick Grant and landscape architect Claude Cormier. Taking a cue from the raw beauty of the board-formed concrete that graces our River City project (as well as the cover of this magazine), we ask Michael McClelland and Graeme Stewart of ERA Architects to take us on a tour of Toronto's **Concrete Architecture** (Page 28). And finally, on Page 40, we look at Nina Rappaport's **Vertical Urban Factory** exhibition, which Urban Capital sponsored at Toronto's Design Exchange.

Our second Urban Capital Magazine comes at an interesting time in our industry. The state of the long bull market in condominium sales is in question, particularly in the country's (and our) largest market – Toronto. But long-term trends point to continued population growth and urbanization, which support continued demand for condominiums going forward, as **Barry Lyon** and **Jasmine Cracknell** explain in their cross-country market survey (see **Real Estate** on Page 45).

And a number of features return from last year, including **Condo Development 101** (or "Condo Development for Dummies"), and **Rear View**, where we look at something that ended for us in the last year (this year it's our little Ottawa sales office that could).

As always it is appropriate to take a moment to thank the many people who make our projects possible, including our many development partners, construction lenders, designers and construction teams. Finally, we'd like to thank our two main magazine contributors, returning from last year: **Austin Macdonald**, our Montreal-based writer who wrote many of the pieces here, and the **Walsh Group**, our go-to marketing and graphic design firm, who made it all happen.

See you next year.



David Wex



Mark Reeve

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# A YEAR IN URBAN CAPITAL'S LIFE

December 2011

January 2012

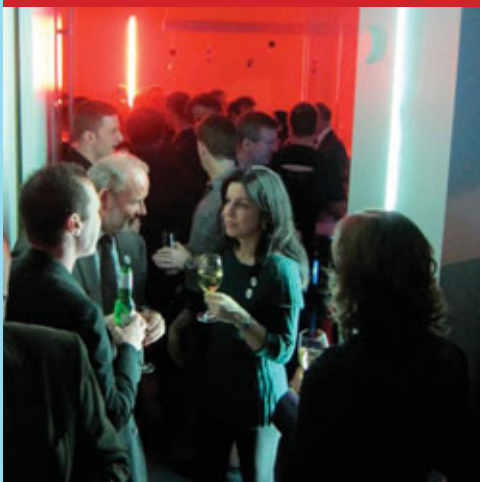
February 2012

March 2012

## DECEMBER 19, 2011

### 1st Annual "Naughty and Nice" Christmas Party

With temperatures dipping below zero we were glad to have all our friends and Urban Capital family warm up at our new head office for our 1st annual Christmas Party. Our naughty and nice theme was quite a hit, and we found out just why Santa has to check his list twice - with a whole lot of "naughties" and not too many "nice". It was a great way to celebrate our successes of the past year and cheer the ones to come!



## JANUARY 10, 2012

### Tableau Groundbreaking Party

It was heading into the dark days of winter, but we couldn't wait for the earth to thaw. So, at the beginning of January we threw a party in anticipation of what was to come - the start of construction of one of the most talked about condos in the centre of Toronto's Entertainment District - Tableau. Above the former Embassy Nightclub we had "Last Call" while we got set to break ground at the corner of Richmond and Peter.



## FEBRUARY 2012

### Urban Toronto interviews Mark & David

When Urban Capital's two partners, David Wex and Mark Reeve, were asked to do an interview with Urban Toronto, it was a no-brainer. They were both excited to discuss their passion - the development business, amongst other things, and how they got here. Emphasizing some of Urban Capital's more recent developments you can get a sense of how their experience has played a role in some of their biggest decisions. Read the article at [www.urbancapital.ca/about](http://www.urbancapital.ca/about)





## JUNE 2012

### River City bridge hoisted into place

A big milestone at Urban Capital's River City project happened in June with the erection of the four storey bridge connecting the two buildings that comprise Phase 1. Meant to extend the form of the Phase 1 building over the road that cuts through it, the bridge also allows residents of each building to share in the amenities of the other. [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)

April 2012

May 2012

June 2012

July 2012

Aug



## JUNE 2012

### Nicholas hits bottom

After six months of technically complex excavation, and luckily without upsetting the surrounding buildings, construction finally hit bottom at Urban Capital's Nicholas project. At five levels down on a 15,000 square foot site, the excavation was more of a corkscrew operation than anything else. [www.nicholasresidences.com](http://www.nicholasresidences.com)

## JUNE 2012

### Central Phase 1 is registered

Congratulations to all of Urban Capital's purchasers at Central Phase 1! With almost all of the 240 units occupied, the condominium was registered in June. Central Phase 1 is the first of five buildings Urban Capital is developing with Ottawa partner Tamarack in the immediate area, so the residents of this phase will be seeing rapid changes in this up-and-coming Ottawa neighbourhood over the next few years.



**JULY 21, 2012**

**Taya Cavanagh becomes Taya Cook**

Well, all good things come to an end. So it is with Taya's single life, which ended (officially) on a beautiful July evening at Archeo in the Distillery District, when she tied the knot with tall, dark and handsome restaurateur Jamie Cook. Next up: a playpen in the boardroom.



June 2012

July 2012

August 2012

September 2012

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

**Urban Capital supports "Migrating Landscapes", Canada's entry to the 2012 Venice Biennale**

Through direct sponsorship and also the pledging of ticket sales from its Trends in Design series, Urban Capital sponsored Migrating Landscapes, Canada's official entry to the 2012 Venice Biennale in Architecture, architecture's "Olympics". This follows its sponsorship of Canada's 2010 entry - Hylozoic Ground, and is part of its on-going support for Canada's design industry.



**JULY 10, 2012**

**How not to launch a neighbourhood branding campaign**

Our "South Central" branding campaign for the neighbourhood around our various developments (including just completed Central Phase 1) in downtown Ottawa got a somewhat chilly reception from local anti-poverty activists, who came out in force to protest our neighbourhood launch party on July 10th. The resulting violence and police take-downs led to headlines in the local newspapers and on the late night TV news, and quite a lot of debate in the blogosphere. While we might accept that attempting to name an existing neighbourhood, especially with the controversial name "South Central", could be construed as "corporate top down" branding, the protesters definitely lost credibility by calling our mid-rise, affordable LEED Gold buildings "racist and anti-queer", and our purchasers "yuppie scum"! Read the Ottawa Citizen and CBC articles online in the 'Our Life' section at [www.urbancapital.ca/about](http://www.urbancapital.ca/about)

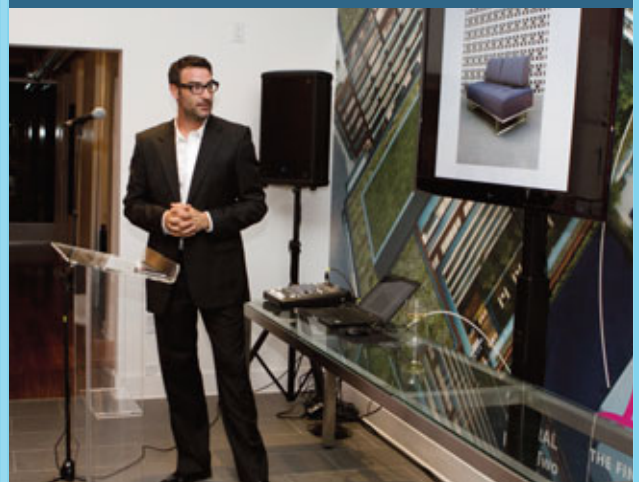


**SEPTEMBER 16, 2012**

**Trends in Design 2012 kicks off with David Podsiadlo of Gus Design and Stylegarage fame**

Our 2012 Trends in Design series in Ottawa kicked off on September 16th with a packed-house audience to listen to Toronto furniture designer and manufacturer David Podsiadlo describe his experiences in designing, manufacturing and selling modern Canadian furniture.

2012  
**trends  
in design**  
INTIMATE INTERACTIVE ENGAGING





### OCTOBER 11, 2012

#### Roderick Grant explores the ubiquity of graphic design in 2012's second Trends in Design

In another jam-packed Trends in Design, OCAD graphic design chair Roderick Grant looked at the importance of graphic design in today's world of minute digital tools and aging demographics.



October 2012

### NOVEMBER 8, 2012

#### Trends in Design 2012 wraps up with Canadian landscape architect Claude Cormier

This year's last Trends in Design offered attendees a very intimate opportunity to hear one of (if not) Canada's premier landscape architect talk about his whimsical, quirky and mostly grass-free portfolio of landscape designs.



November 2012

December 2012



### SEPTEMBER 2012

#### Urban Capital signs deal to develop the largest residential tower in downtown Winnipeg

Urban Capital is heading to the Prairies! In September UC entered into an agreement with local developer Longboat to jointly develop the residential component of Centrepoint, a major office, hotel and residential project in downtown Winnipeg, across from the MTS Centre.

### SEPTEMBER 2012

#### Urban Capital sponsors "Vertical Urban Factory" at the Design Exchange

In September Urban Capital sponsored Vertical Urban Factory, the leading fall exhibition at the Design Exchange, Canada's Design Museum. Curated by American architectural curator and historian Nina Rappaport, the exhibition looked at over 30 urban factories, from American Apparel in Los Angeles to VW's "Transparent Factory" in Dresden, to ask whether factories can be reintegrated into today's urban centres.



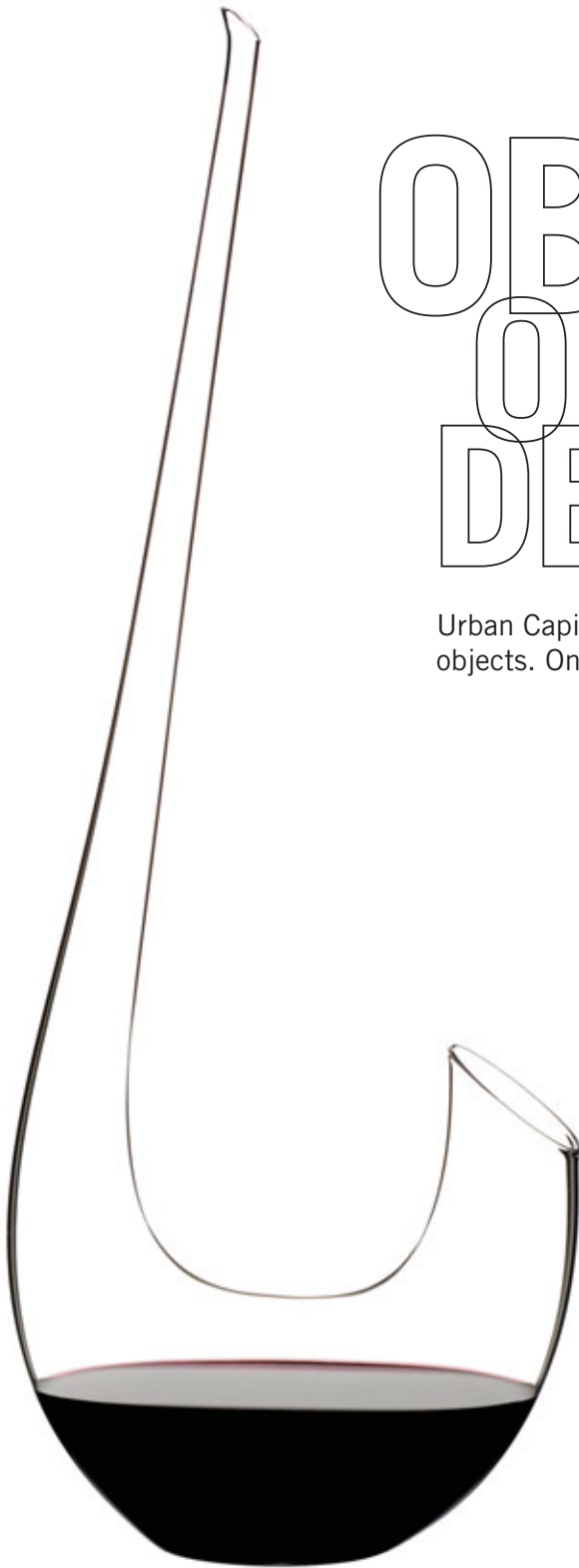
### NOVEMBER 2012

#### LCBO coming to the ground floor of Central Phase 2

After a year of negotiations led by our Ottawa partners the Taggarts, in December we snagged an LCBO for the ground floor of Central Phase 2, a major coup for all our Central residents, who will no longer have to walk far to stock their bars. From what we understand, this is the first LCBO to be located in a stand-alone condominium building, and represented a major sea-change in how the LCBO views its retail stores.

# OBJECTS OF OUR DESIGNERS

Urban Capital asked five of its designers to reveal their favourite objects. On this page, the sometimes surprising results.



**THE DESIGNER**  
Rudy Wallman,  
Rudy Wallman Architects

Rudy is the architect behind Tableau

**THE OBJECT** Riedel Swan decanter

**THE REASON** "Because Form follows Fantasy"



**THE DESIGNER**  
Marc Ryan, Public Work

Marc designed the landscape plan for a competition Urban Capital recently entered for a major site in Halifax (results unknown at time of writing!)

**THE OBJECT** The Louisville Slugger bat

**THE REASON** "This beautifully functional object is a classic. The Slugger has hardly changed over its 120 year life because its design is so simple and essential. The bats are carved out of ash because it is one of the lightest, strongest timbers that tends to flex instead of break. I love the way the design works strategically with the grain of the wood, its timeless form born out of creating the 'sweet spot', the way it feels, how it ages over time, and the sense of tradition associated with the object. It has served legends of the game from Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb and Lou Gehrig to today's players, and it still uses the same material and form, while embracing new fabrication techniques. Go Jays."





**THE DESIGNER**  
Roland Rom Colthoff, RAW Design

Roland is currently designing a building for Urban Capital in Ottawa

**THE OBJECT** Parlee TT road bike

**THE REASON** "I like this bike because although it's really a single purpose machine each manufacturer solves the puzzle a little differently and you can see when you get up close an artistry in the engineering. The freedom of the new carbon fiber materials means that each bike manufacturer can have a distinct personality. My Parlee, which just finished an Ironman, is hand built in Utah (the stealth graphics are cool too)."



**THE DESIGNER**  
Elaine Cecconi,  
Cecconi Simone  
Interior Design

Elaine has been working with Urban Capital for close to 20 years, most recently designing the interiors of Trinity Towns and Tableau

**THE OBJECT** Art and Cook cookbook

**THE REASON** "One of my favourite design objects is a cookbook. It's not an ordinary cookbook. It combines all the things I love: food, packaging, graphics and photography all mixed with whimsy. The package is fashioned out of a garden variety cardboard egg crate, which is a nod to our heightened awareness around local and organic food. The book nestles within this cradle. The cover, photography, page layouts and recipes are all beautiful. It takes food to a whole new level; it's a visual art."



**THE DESIGNER**  
Deni Poletti, CORE Architects

At last count Deni has designed ten buildings for Urban Capital, in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal.

**THE OBJECT** The Espresso Machine

**THE REASON** "Espresso machines found on every marble countertop across the globe are an industrial work of art. The appreciation of its design comes from its elegant balance of leavers, dials, stems and gauges. The appreciation of this object also extends into the artful display and sounds of the barista creating the coveted elixir."

Urban Capital and Tamarack launched the first Trends in Design series in the Fall of 2010 with five nights of fashion, urban design, industrial design, architecture and interior design. In the fall of 2012, they followed up with the second series, this time on furniture design, graphic design and landscape architecture. In what follows, a brief review of how it went.

2012

# trends in design

INTIMATE INTERACTIVE ENGAGING



NIGHT 6  
DESIGNING MODERN FURNITURE  
DAVID PODSIADLO

NIGHT 7  
GRAPHIC DESIGN IS OUR ACCESS  
TO THE NEW WORLD  
RODERICK GRANT

NIGHT 8  
LANDSCAPE DESIGN WITHOUT GRASS  
CLAUDE CORMIER



# N6 Designing Modern Furniture

Night Six



## David Podsiadlo

Partner, Gus Design Group

David Podsiadlo is a partner and head designer at Gus Design Group, an 11 year old Canadian furniture company based in Toronto. He studied Industrial Design before co-founding Stylegarage in the city's West Queen West neighbourhood. His furniture designs emphasize raw materials, clean lines and basic forms. After gaining local notoriety with Stylegarage, David launched Gus\* in 2001, which now designs, manufactures and sells furniture in North America and Asia.

Tall and athletic, with a blithe and ethereal spirit and a masterful way in the art of understatement, David Podsiadlo, principal at Gus Design Group, is as Canadian as the furniture he designs: updated mid-century minimalist Canadiana, pieces with names like the Atwood Sectional and the Trudeau Sofa.

"Similar to Scandinavian countries, contemporary Canadian design is accessible to the rest of the world. Yet, at Gus we try not to create things that scream Canada — like lumberjack-check ottomans," Podsiadlo offers, "...which might not be a bad idea, come to think of it," adding after a pregnant pause. Intended as self-deprecation, the moment turned into one of inspiration.

"I started Gus and Stylegarage, our retail concept, with my wife and my best friend in 2001, which may be a whacky thing to do but seems to be working out. I think that creating a brand has really been our success," Podsiadlo explains. "Anyone can make a chair, anyone can make a five-sided stainless steel box. We mix it with an elegant style, our name, the fact that we return phone calls, and we do the small things correctly," all qualities which have allowed the troika of founders to sustain their business. "It's the little things that make someone want to purchase something."

Generally, Gus is inspired by simple forms and honest materials, according to the firm's mission statement.

For example: Gus's Timber Table. "We used to sell large factory end-cuts, like stumps of wood, which were very popular but hard to get a hold of, and could be expensive," he recalls. He wondered how

Gus could reproduce them as something man-made. "We took acrylic, roughly 12 inches by 12 inches by 18 inches, and silk screened the bottom sides with a wood-grained pattern, but not a very complicated wood-grained pattern," he says. Now, "You can sit on it or it makes a stunning end table. Just editing things down to the bare essentials, seems to be working."

Yet, to hear him detail the secret of Gus's success, he sounds more like an art director than an upholsterer - of which he is neither. According to him, the value-add of Gus lies in creating breathtaking "looks" in their marketing materials.

Gus's humble lead furniture designer is happy to give credit where it's due: "We have a great graphic designer on staff who knows just how big the font should be, where it should go and the right spacing," he says. "Any time we do a project we like to photograph it in a unique and interesting way, like a Robert Smithson work."

Podsiadlo has made a career out of combining his furniture with found objects and eye-catching backdrops: bright yellow string sourced from a hotel's parking lot outside of North Carolina's semi-annual High Point Market trade show; vases unearthed from a Queen Street West neighbour's garbage can; or playful, oversized chalk drawings on slate-coloured walls.

Truth be told: "It's extremely cheap but extremely stylish," he says, "You don't need to go out and spend a ton of money on accessories and stuff. You only need a good eye and some creativity to make any space unique."



# N7

## Graphic Design is Our Access to The New World

Night Seven



### Roderick Grant

Co-Chair, Graphic Design Program, OCAD  
Roderick Grant is a professor, designer, and current Co-Chair of the Graphic Design Program at OCAD University. He has taught graphic design in Canada, the United States and the Middle East. Prior to his work in education Roderick was a graphic designer with Methodologie, then nbbj in Seattle, Washington, working on complex information design and way-finding projects.

"I'm not sure how many of you can actually read or see this," Roderick Grant, Co-Chair of the Graphic Design Program at OCAD, wondered of his slides on the 50" screen as he began his presentation – a maybe unintentional but certainly on-point introduction.

The devil will be in the details for future graphic designers of all stripes, from interface designers who must conceive human behaviours on touch screens, to typeface designers who must account for whether their letters and symbols will be front- or back-lit. Yet, their goal is the same: "At the end of the day it's not about brands or about sales," Grant warns. "It's actually about people, access and inclusion. It's a universal problem."

Grant told two seemingly unrelated stories, one on the individual scale, how gadgets like iPhones will no longer ship with manuals, and the other on an environment scale, how signage at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport gets multi-lingual, multi-generational travelers from gate to baggage claim.

The crux of the matter is our aging populations and their failing eyesight. While this has implications for many sectors of the economy, it's of paramount importance for those working in the field formerly known as graphic design – now an agglomeration of way-finding, signage, identity, information, packaging, publication and systems design.

On the one hand, on the individual scale, designers must visually translate objects and their behaviours, often based in physical reality, into pixels and intuitive,

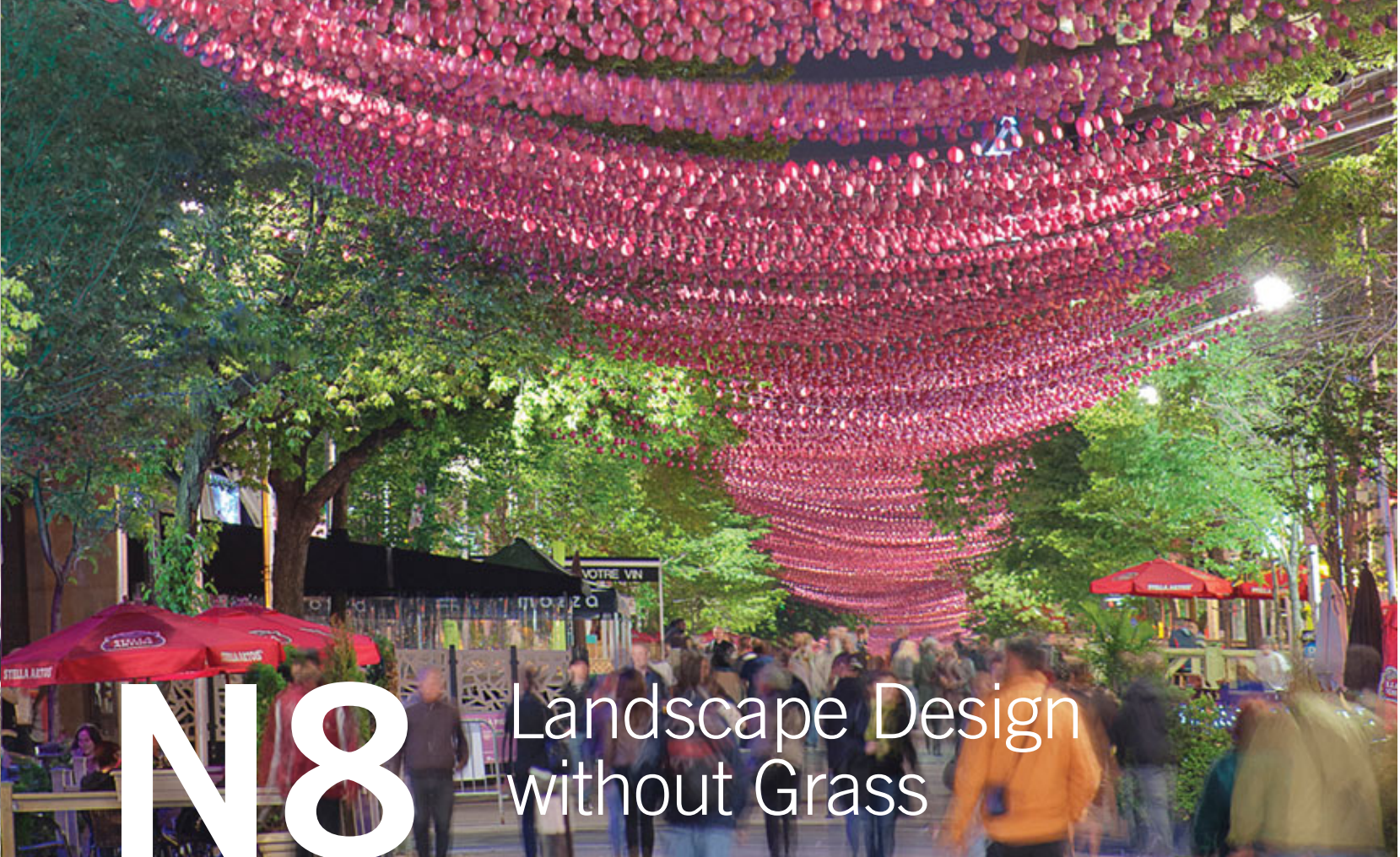
compelling and functional interfaces – keypads, calendars, magazines, to name a few basic examples. Sometimes this is done well (Flipboard) while other times it's a mind-boggling disaster (Apple's faux leather trim for iCal for OSX Lion).

"What are you asking someone to do before they get to do the thing they want to do and why?" Grant asks, citing Donald Norman's maxim from *The Design of Everyday Things*. "If we are going to play in this digital soup of phone interfaces, the web, or whatever, it's a question for which we have to come up with an answer pretty quickly." Good on-screen design translates a physical reality into virtual behaviours towards which people are going to gravitate.

On the other hand, in architectural environments, where type isn't "scalable", designers will increasingly have to worry about such things as accessibility for disabled people. While this means larger type for the growing numbers with dwindling eyesight, it also means more non-verbal cues. "We might start seeing an increased reuse of the visual rather than the verbal, ideally you start seeing those things happening at the same time to guarantee communication," Grant explains about his signage master plan work for Sea-Tac, but which applies to all public spaces.

His two narratives, extreme cases, bookend the future for designers and the level of attention they have to respond to. "Eventually, somewhere and somehow it's a profession that has to speak to everyone."





# N8 Landscape Design without Grass

Night Eight



**Claude Cormier**

Principal, *Claude Cormier + Associés*  
Claude Cormier has built an internationally recognized office in Montréal that calls itself a “Landscape Architecture – Urban Design” firm. His practice extends far beyond the conventional realm of traditional landscape design to forge bridges between urban design, public art and architecture, resulting in such wonderful urban spaces as Sugar Beach and HTO Park in Toronto, and Place d’Youville, Tom and Pink Balls in Montreal.

Claude Cormier is Canada’s landscape stargazer. A playful contrarian, he has brought Warholesque change to his field, a seismic shift. He has a penchant for props, rather than potted plants, in his whimsical, entertaining designs, like blue sticks, pink balls or an 11-meter 3-tiered maroon Victorian pedestal fountain (now welcoming guests at Toronto’s Four Seasons.)

The down-to-earth head of Montreal-based *Claude Cormier et Associés* provided a fast-paced survey of his firm’s portfolio for the last installment of the 2012 Trends in Design. The lighthearted and mad-capped evening was an intimate affair. Cormier, who often laughed loudest, divulged that his series of urban beaches in Toronto and Montreal earned him the nickname “Son of a Beach” by a Berkeley academic.

*Blue Stick Garden* from 2000 is the most emblematic work of Cormier’s genius. It was a three-month long conceptual garden in a remote region of Quebec. Cormier populated the rows of mixed flower borders along snaking walkways of a 1920s heritage garden with tall, Himalayan Blue Poppy coloured sticks, the hue sampled from the local species. These densely spaced rows of square reeds of varying heights were poppy blue on three sides, bright orange on the fourth and oriented in the same direction.

“Walking down the paths created a chromatic experience, as though you were in a real, blooming garden but compressed in time,” he says, “Like Frederick Law Olmstead who did Central Park and Parc Mont Royal, *Blue Stick Garden* was based on the Victorian period’s notion of

experiencing the landscape by moving through it.”

Two years later *Blue Stick Garden* showed again in Toronto at Canada Blooms, an annual flower and garden show. The flower- and plant-less installation caused a ruckus. “When you push the limits and when the thing becomes controversial, I think it’s always a good sign because it means that you’re right on it,” Cormier says.

Cormier’s meteoric rise has thrust him into an entirely new orbit of multi-acre and million-square-foot developments. Yet the fundamentals remain the same. “We’ve kept this attitude that landscape architecture may be a fun thing; a sustainable thing or ecological thing but it must have aesthetics, meaning and sensibility,” he says, reasserting his firm’s design touchstones.

Cormier also attributes his firm’s success to its singular focus, “We’re always trying to tap into the idea of doing just one thing per project, just one. If you try to do too much you miss it and it just becomes noise,” he explains.

It was impatience that led Claude Cormier, who studied plant breeding, landscape architecture and the history and theory of design, to begin working with inanimate elements. “If you wait for flowers to do something good or great you’re going to wait three, four or five years.”

“I don’t have a garden,” Cormier says, during the question and answer period, provoking yet another eruption of laughter. A case of the garden-less landscape architect, the tidbit ended the occasion on a high note.

## Past Presentations



### Night One

## Fashion trends and show

**Lara Ceroni** On-line Editor, Elle Canada



Fashion is the ultimate trend setting industry. Its fast pace and cutting edge visionaries are always a few seasons ahead of the current trends, forecasting the next revolution down the runway. So where will we be five months from now, and five years from now? In Urban Capital's first Trends in Design night, Elle Canada On-line Editor, Lara Ceroni talked about where fashion is going, and what is taking it there. Following Lara's talk, Schad Boutique unveiled their top lines for Fall/Winter 2010 in an exclusive fashion show.



### Night Two

## New thinking in designing cities

**George Dark** Partner, Urban Strategies



Cities are changing. Canadian cities are changing faster than most. They are becoming more urban, larger in population and size, but wanting to stop the size growth. People want to walk more, drive less and experience more nature in the city. Urban agriculture... what's that about? Our jobs are changing, the space allocated to jobs is changing and how we work is changing. Suddenly graffiti is a good thing ... it's urban art. Suddenly design counts and is marketable. In the second Trends in Design night, George Dark talked about the changing dynamic of building a successful Canadian city.



### Night Three

## Where industrial design is taking us

**Julian Goss** Program Chair, Industrial Design Department, OCAD



Industrial or product design lives in the moments and experience of almost everything we do. It's the toothbrush we use in the morning, the paperclip and laptop we use at work and the furniture we relax on in the evening. It's also changing. New technologies are creating new possibilities, these create new needs and desires and in turn new economies. In this Trends in Design presentation Julian Goss talked about where industrial design has been, where it is today and where it might be taking us in the near future.



### Night Four

## Architecture in our new century

**Robert Claiborne** Design Lead, Cannon Design



Architecture is constantly changing and reinventing itself. The ability to inspire and to enhance the way we live knows no limits. No longer seen as distinct objects in our cities, buildings today are all about integration, creating alliances with landscape, urbanism and sustainability, and new opportunities for inventiveness. These in turn allow for unexpected connections between culture, recreation, and work, and for explorations into integrated space, flexible space and transparency. Rob Claiborne explored these latest architectural trends and how they impact our urban experience.



### Night Five

## Interior design thinks small

**Elaine Cecconi** Partner, Cecconi Simone Interior Design



With the urbanization of Canadian cities comes a new way in which we live. The realities of city development – with land increasingly expensive to buy and buildings costly to construct – are resulting in smaller dwelling units. But less space doesn't mean living less. By challenging the conventional product that we were building in our cities, we have come up with creative and intelligent uses of three dimensional space that have transferred the measure of value from square feet to cubic feet. In Urban Capital's 5th Trends in Design night Elaine Cecconi explained how we have adapted our design thinking to small spaces over the past ten years, and where we might be heading in the next.



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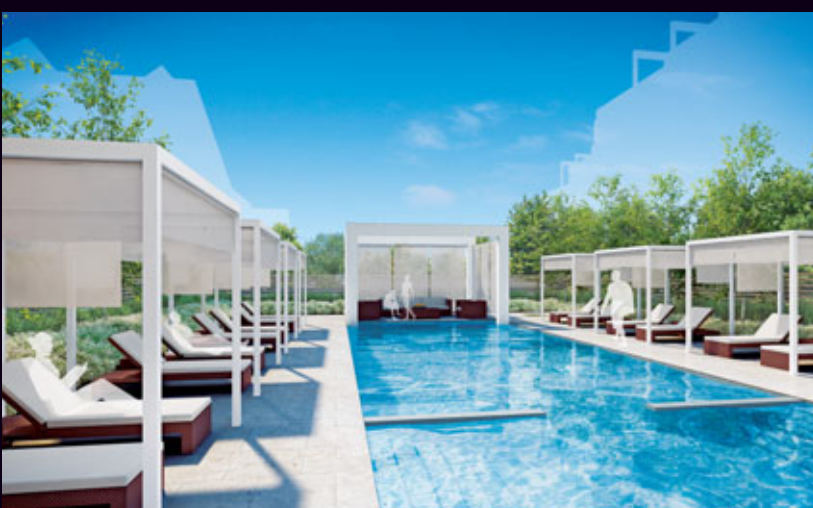
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# MIGRATING LANDSCAPES



canadian pavilion venice biennale 2012

## migrating landscapes

All proceeds from Urban Capital's 2012 Trends in Design series went to support *Migrating Landscapes*, Canada's entry into the 2012 Venice Biennale, for which Urban Capital was also a corporate sponsor. Curated by Winnipeg-based 5468796 Architects Inc. and Jae-Sung Chon, the exhibition featured eighteen video narratives and architectural scale models of "dwellings" that collectively questioned socio-political borders, the migration of people and ideas, and how this affects contemporary architecture.

The Venice Biennale is the world's most prestigious international contemporary architectural event, the Olympics of architecture. Sponsoring Canada's entry into the Biennale, which Urban Capital did in 2010 and will continue to do in future years, is the company's way of supporting experimental architecture in Canada, and Canada's presence on the international architecture scene.

For more information:  
[www.migratinglandscapes.ca](http://www.migratinglandscapes.ca)  
[www.labiennale.org/en/architecture](http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture)



# OUR PORTFOLIO

# 2012

# CENTRAL





## CENTRAL 1

Central 1 is the first of a three phase, 540 unit LEED Silver mixed use development, with retail stores and “loft houses” at the ground level, and residential units above. Located over two city blocks south of Bank and Gladstone, the development is ideally situated between Ottawa’s downtown core and the trendy Glebe neighbourhood.

Central’s LEED Silver features include green roofs and rain water storage systems, energy efficient windows and mechanical systems, water efficient fixtures, sustainable materials, and partnership with a car share program for use by all residents.

### DETAILS

**ADDRESS**

453 Bank Street, Ottawa

**DESCRIPTION**

Urban condominiums - 3 phases, 540 units, Phase 1 - 10 storeys, 239 units

**DESIGNERS**

CORE Architects

**DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

Taggart Group

**WEBSITE**

centralcondominiums.com

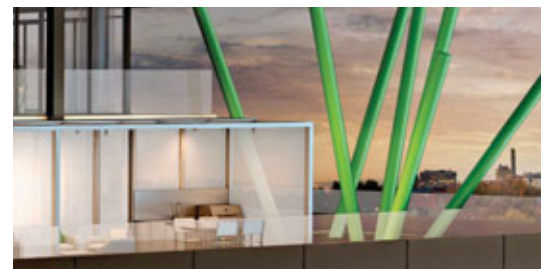
# UNDER CONSTRUCTION

## RIVER CITY TOR



As the first phase of Toronto's new revitalized waterfront, River City is Toronto's groundbreaker for the twenty first century. Designed by Montreal based Saucier + Perrotte architects, winners of seven Governor General Awards, and surrounded by some of Toronto's most spectacular urban parks, this LEED Gold, carbon neutral development of over 1,000 loft-style condominiums, family friendly townhouses, cafes, restaurants and boutiques will be like nothing else in Toronto. Urban Capital won the right to develop River City in 2008 after an extensive public tender process in which 18 national and international developers participated. Phase 1 of River City is now under construction. Phase 2 construction starts January 2013. [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)

## TABLEAU TOR



A "condo-collaboration of art, fashion, design and good taste", Tableau is Urban Capital's latest offering in Toronto's Entertainment District, following on the heels of Camden Lofts, the Sylvia, Charlotte Lofts and Boutique. Developed jointly with Malibu Investments and Alit Developments, Tableau is centred around a huge structural table which divides the mixed-use development into three zones: residential suites "above the table"; condo amenities "on the table"; and commercial space, retail space and a huge Claude Cormier designed public plaza featuring a 90' art piece by Canadian artist Shayne Dark "below the table". Tableau is now under construction. [www.tableaucondos.com](http://www.tableaucondos.com)

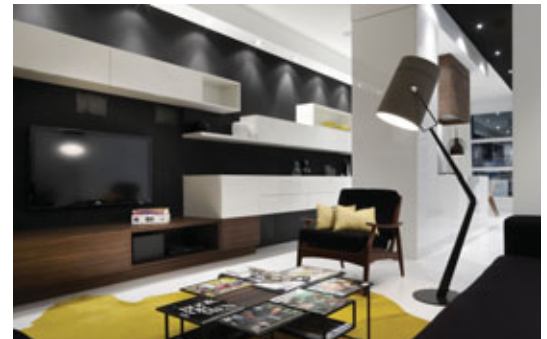


# NICHOLAS TOR



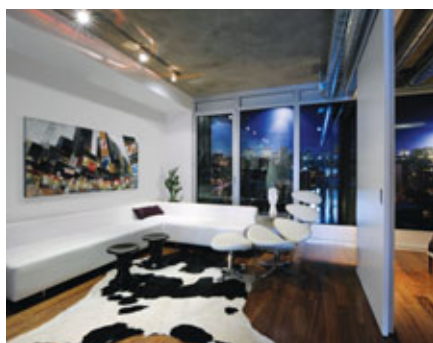
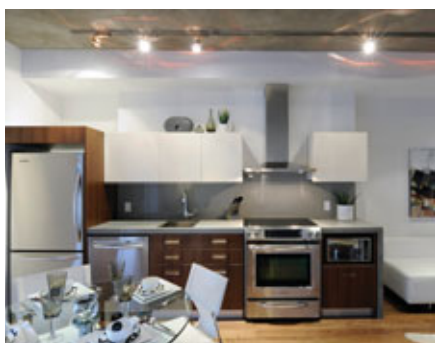
Nicholas Residences is set on charming 19th century cobblestoned St Nicholas Street. Immediately south of Bay, Bloor and Yorkville, it is steps from one of North America's premier retail neighbourhoods. By carefully incorporating the Planing Mill Building as a design element in its base, and by adding a series of contemporary brick faced townhouses, Nicholas stays true to the street's beauty and heritage. This 35 storey 308 unit project, which is 100% sold out and now under construction, is being developed jointly with Alit Developments. [www.nicholasresidences.com](http://www.nicholasresidences.com)

# TRINITY BELLWOODS TOR



Perfectly located between Trinity Bellwoods Park and vibrant Little Italy, Trinity Bellwoods Town+Homes consists of 45 contemporary-design freehold townhouses ranging in size from 1,900 to 2,650 sf. Trinity Towns, which is being jointly developed with Shram Homes, is Urban Capital's first foray into stand-alone townhome development. As with Nicholas it is 100% sold out and now under construction. [www.trinitytowns.com](http://www.trinitytowns.com)

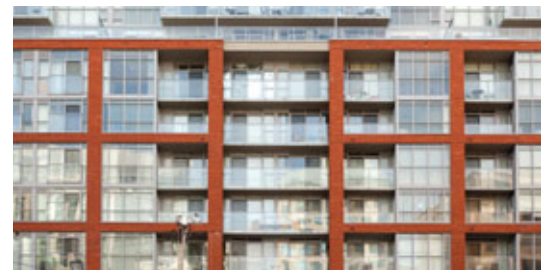
# CENTRAL 2 TOR



Central 2 is the second phase of Urban Capital's three phase, 540 unit LEED Silver Central project in Ottawa's Centretown. The 9 storey building continues the mid-rise form and loft-style interior design of Central Phase 1, completed in 2012. [www.central2.com](http://www.central2.com)

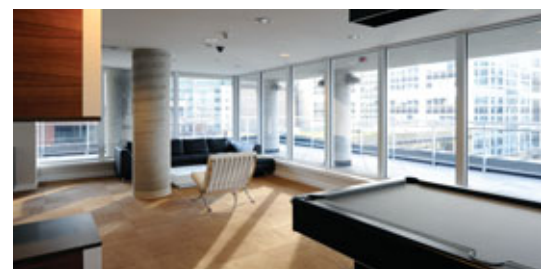
# PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED

## BOUTIQUE TOR



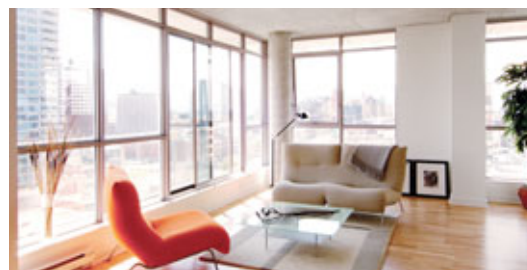
Boutique is two-phase, 637 unit development located at the nexus of Toronto's Entertainment and Financial Districts. Combining the best of condominium features and boutique hotel-style amenities, the development close to sold out shortly after being launched in late 2005. The project was completed in 2011.

## MONDRIAN OTT



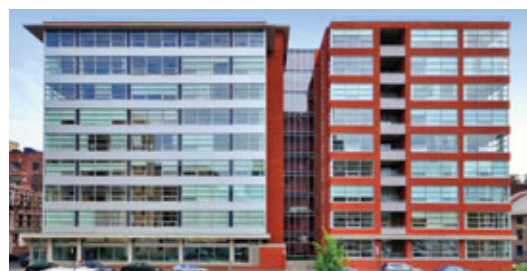
A homage to Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, this 23 storey building in Ottawa's central business district is notable for its striking red panes of glass interspersed among strong linear elements. Completed in 2011, the building contains 249 contemporary condominiums and double-storey penthouses, retail at ground level, and a resort-inspired outdoor pool area. The condominium portion sits atop a five storey public parking podium, which is enclosed in a luminescent glass screen.

# EAST MARKET OTT



The East Market is a three phase, 420-unit condominium development in Ottawa's trendy Byward Market district. Launched in 2000, the project was the first large-scale condominium to be developed in the city in over ten years. The East Market introduced to Ottawa many of the "new-loft" features that Urban Capital developed in Toronto, offering the city's purchasers a sophisticated urban housing choice not previously available to them. As a result, the project had the strongest sales launch in Ottawa's history. The project was completed in 2008.

# McGILL OUEST MTL



McGill Ouest, Urban Capital's first development in Montreal, is a two-phase, 244 unit development in the now coveted district adjacent to McGill Street, between Old Montreal and the Cité du multimedia. Like East Market in Ottawa, it introduced high-design "new loft" condominiums to a market where they had not existed before. Launched in late 2003, the first phase of McGill Ouest was completed in 2006, and the second phase in 2008.

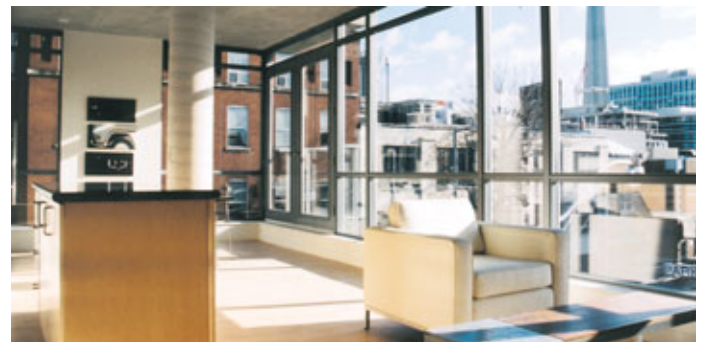
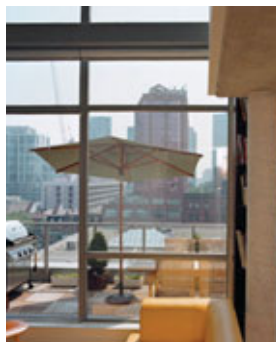
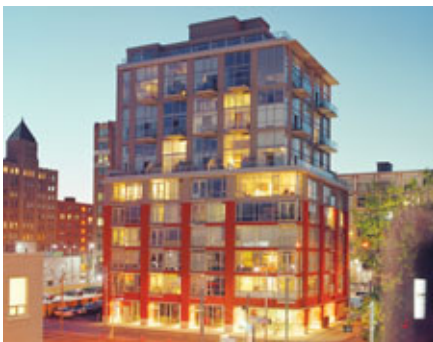
## PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED

# ST. ANDREW ON THE GREEN TOR



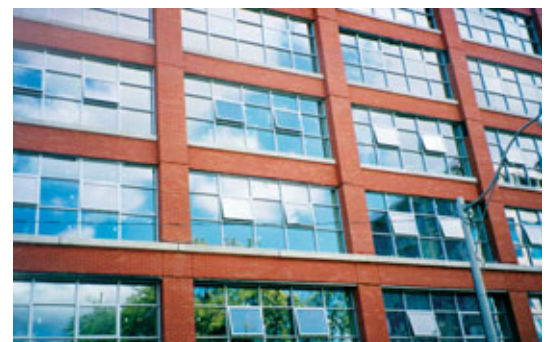
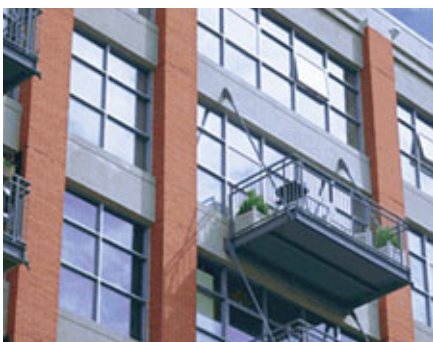
St Andrew on the Green is a finely proportioned, nine storey terraced building located on a winding crescent overlooking the Islington Golf Club in Toronto's Islington Village neighbourhood. Beautifully detailed in traditional masonry and accent precast, St Andrew includes a varied collection of 106 suites with bay windows, French balconies, terraces, patios and roof-top gardens.

# CHARLOTTE LOFTS TOR



Completed in mid-2002, the 66 unit Charlotte Lofts was Urban Capital's third "new-loft" building in Toronto's King-Spadina district. Designed by Core Architects, Charlotte Lofts features huge windows, brick on the lower floors, and lighter materials higher up. This division of materials allowed the building to relate to its early 20th century warehouse neighbours, while at the same time remaining true to its clean, modern design.

# CAMDEN LOFTS TOR



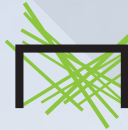
Completed in 1999, this 48 unit loft-style building set a new trend in both design and location. The first new residential building in the King-Spadina District, Camden Lofts led the way for other developers in this formerly industrial area. Camden was also among the first in Toronto to introduce "new-loft" features, including exposed concrete ceilings and walls, huge warehouse style windows, and custom industrial lighting. The building won a City of Toronto Urban Design Award in 2001.

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# CONCRETE ARCHITECTURE



Concrete architecture, so prevalent in the 1960s and 70s but maligned in the years afterwards, has the potential to make a comeback after a decade of glass towers. **Michael McClelland and Graeme Stewart** of ERA Architects give UC Magazine a brief history of concrete buildings, and take us on a tour of some of their favourite examples in Toronto.



From schools to housing to highways, the medium of Toronto's explosive post-war growth was concrete. The material lent itself to expressions of both mechanical production and individual exuberance that captured this age, perhaps best exemplified in the contrasting work of Parkin Associates and Uno Prii shown here.

FOR FURTHER READING:  
*Concrete Toronto, A Guidebook to Concrete Architecture from the Fifties to the Seventies*  
 by Michael McClelland, Graeme Stewart



**ORTHO PHARMACEUTICAL PLANT**

ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1954  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1956  
 STATUS: Standing

The bright white concrete exoskeleton of this structure was John Parkin's answer to Don Mills master planner Macklin Hancock's ideals for his modern town: clean, sleek, and, most importantly, modern. Highly published, Ortho became an icon and was catalytic to modern design in Canada.



**THE SHERATON CENTRE**

ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1965  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1972  
 STATUS: Standing

Built in concrete to achieve a contextual relationship with the New City Hall, the Sheraton Centre was part of an effort by the City to surround its new urban square with a modern project worthy of Revell's celebrated icon.



**SIDNEY SMITH HALL**

ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1960  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1962  
 STATUS: Standing

The first building in the University of Toronto's westward expansion, Sidney Smith's tower, podia and plaza marked a bold new direction for the historic campus. An early and refined example of postwar modernism in Canada, the building has evolved to meet changing demands.



**THE CLARKE INSTITUTE**

ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1961  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1964  
 STATUS: Standing

Associated with the westward expansion of the University of Toronto, the Clarke Institute was the area's first modern tower, its bright white moulded concrete precast panels bringing out the sculptural possibilities and simplicity of the modern material.

Concrete has been the preferred material of great architects for more than a century. When Frank Lloyd Wright finished building Unity Temple in Chicago, his first all-concrete building, he said he had ceased being an architect of structure and had become an architect of space. So liberating was the potential of concrete that Wright's most famous structures would have been unbuildable without it. He pushed the limits of the material to their extreme with the cantilevers of Fallingwater, the sinuous forms of the Guggenheim and the innovative precast concrete of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.

Concurrently in Europe Le Corbusier was testing the artistic potential of concrete. He

talked about 'béton brut', meaning rough concrete, and with that he meant that he wanted to see not smooth finished forms, but a texture to the surface of his buildings that expressed the act of making, the impression of the formwork, and the builders' hand. The fluidity of concrete allowed Le Corbusier and other architects to explore new territories and invent new forms.

Concrete had an impact locally in Toronto as well. During the 1950s, Toronto, as a growing city, found a natural affinity for the use of this innovative material. The surge of immigration from Europe brought with it urban planners, architects, and tradespeople, all of whom were skilled in the new uses of concrete. During the 1960s and





**BATA HEADQUARTERS**  
 ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1963  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1965  
 STATUS: Gone

This Temple-like Bata Headquarters was sited on a rise overlooking Eglinton and the Don Valley. John Parkin celebrated modular precast concrete construction in this building by setting its organic frame against smooth sheets of glass.



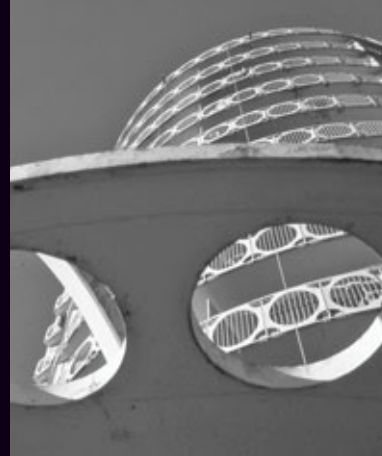
**20 PRINCE ARTHUR**  
 ARCHITECT: Uno Prii  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1963  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1965  
 STATUS: Standing

This modern tower has become the canonic Prii statement, its sweeping form a symbol of mod 1960's sophistication in a style unique to Toronto. Surrounded by Victorian streetscapes, its space-age look has come to help define the eclectic character of the historic Annex neighbourhood.



**ROSEDALE VALLEY BRIDGE**  
 ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1954  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1966  
 STATUS: Standing

The little brother of the Bloor Viaduct, the Rosedale Valley Bridge brings the Bloor-Danforth subway gracefully across the Rosedale Ravine's deep gorge. Soaring over treetops, this open spandrel concrete arch bridge is enclosed to prevent train noise from disturbing the neighbourhood around it.



**44 WALMER ROAD**  
 ARCHITECT: Uno Prii  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1967  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1969  
 STATUS: Standing

44 Walmer brought a light, modern motif to the dense Victorian architecture of Toronto's West Annex. Modest in scale compared with other Prii projects, this cruciform point tower has become a neighbourhood icon through its curvilinear balconies, sculptural foundation and porte cochere.



**NATIONAL LIFE**  
 ARCHITECT: John C. Parkin  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1971  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1974  
 STATUS: Standing

National Life was designed as a modern addition to the monumental streetscape of University Avenue. Sculptural piers lift the building's heavy bulk, under which hangs the cantilevered second storey, while the building's warm light limestone aggregate echoes the neighbouring masonry structures.



**JANE EXBURY TOWERS**  
 ARCHITECT: Uno Prii  
 DATE OF CONCEPTION: 1968  
 DATE OF COMPLETION: 1970  
 STATUS: Standing

Landmarks visible for miles, the Jane Exbury Towers are a modern statement in Toronto's northern fringe. A further iteration of Uno Prii's characteristic sweeping forms, these five identical towers, repeated in typical modern fashion, bring a remarkable coherence and originality to the ravine site.

1970s the city had a substantial building boom and it built more high-rise concrete towers than any other North American city outside of New York. In fact it was in Toronto that the "flying form" was invented, a method of reusing the concrete formwork over and over again, and it was this invention that suddenly increased the potential to build quickly and efficiently. This Canadian invention is now used throughout the world.

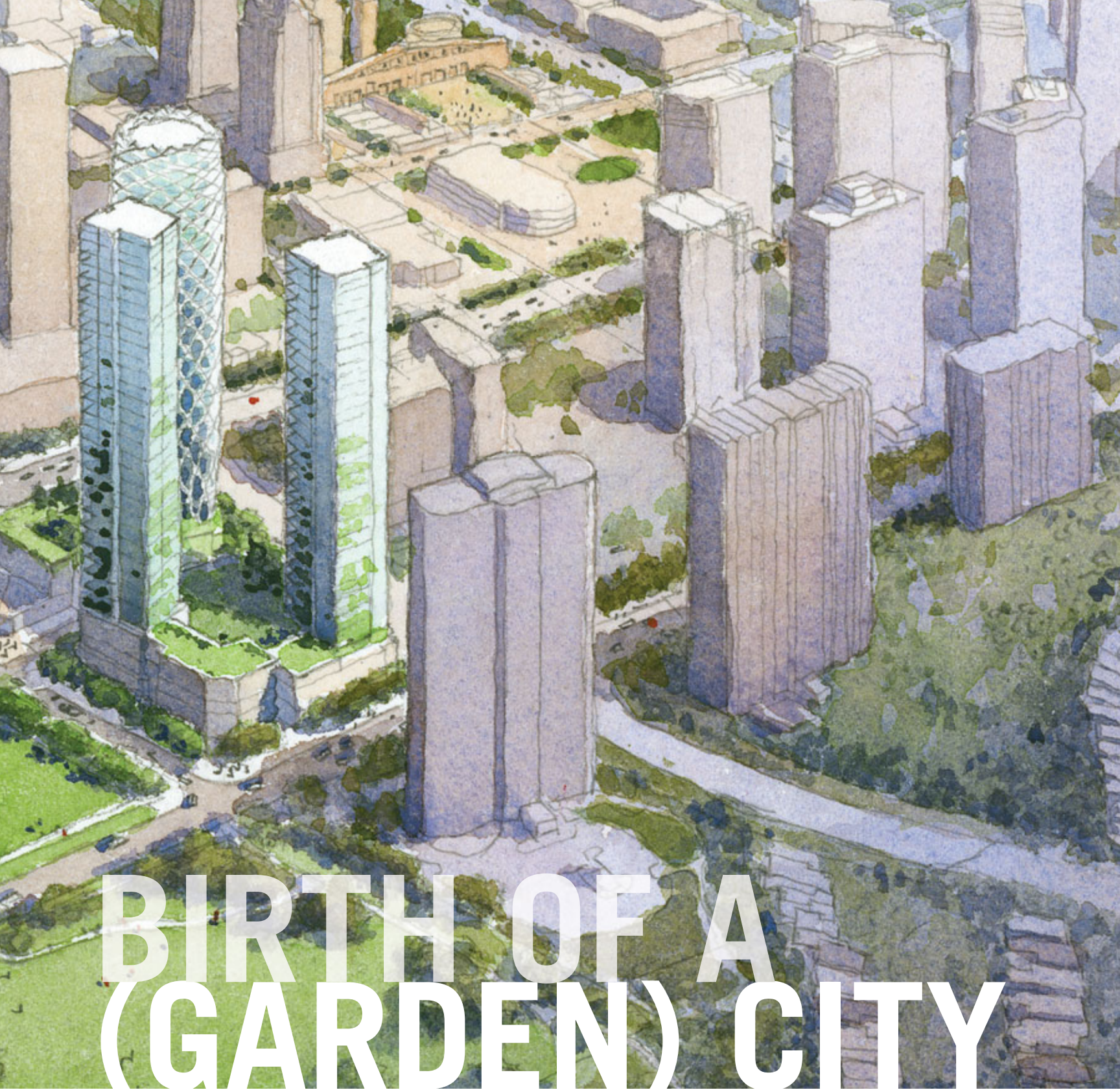
In post-war Canada, the country was experiencing unprecedented growth. There was an enthusiasm and optimism about the future, and with the celebrations of the centennial year in

1967, Canada looked forward to a new era of prosperity. Concrete was the material that best represented the bold new spirit of the times. Unlike the masonry materials of stone and brick, concrete was a material that could be understood as democratic, non-elitist, and modern. This led to innovation at many scales. Key landmarks like the CN Tower and major university buildings, both at York University and the University of Toronto, were proudly made of concrete, and leading local architects, like Irving Grossman, John Parkin and Uno Prii, produced designs for a range of buildings that explored the expressive nature of the material.

Toronto's architecture over the past decade has been dominated by a fascination with lightness and transparency, with building envelopes made principally of glass. Yet these clear façades have been buoyed by robust concrete frames and as we see the new city emerge around us, concrete is a dominant material. More recently, an emerging fascination with both opacity and sustainability in building envelopes has allowed us to take a renewed interest in the possibilities of concrete as a building's primary expression. There is now a great opportunity for concrete to take on again a leading role, and for design innovation to take its cues from Toronto's long concrete heritage.



**In 2011 Urban Capital was asked to lead the master planning of a 16 acre site at the western edge of Downtown Mississauga. The resulting community – “Garden City Mississauga” – could end up being a modern take on the original Garden City Movement from over a century ago.**



# BIRTH OF A (GARDEN) CITY

**W**hat is the “Garden City” of the twenty first century?

Back in 1898, Sir Ebenezer Howard created a movement in England to bring the working class out of the unhealthy, overcrowded Victorian cities of the time into new, tidy, self-contained communities where people would breathe fresh air and have access to parkland. Each community would have its own homes, businesses, industries and parks, all connected to a major city, but separated from it by “greenbelts”.

Ebenezer's plan was called the “Garden City Movement”, and while it was a wonderful idea, it didn't really turn out as planned. Instead, over the past century we built today's typical suburban municipalities, single-purpose sprawling “bedroom” communities serving the adjacent urban centre.

Mississauga, the city that sits at Toronto's west end, has been trying to buck this trend. Over the past twenty years Canada's sixth largest community has opted for “product



differentiation” and has been shaping itself into a full-fledged stand-alone city. Since 1987, when municipal officials moved their city hall to Hurontario and Burnhamthorpe, Mississauga has been steadily working on an identifiable downtown core with a distinctive skyline.

Specifically, the city is in the midst of converting a 2.3 by 1.5 km-wide area into Downtown Mississauga, a dense live-work-play neighbourhood with a sense of location and a palpable character. According to Ed Sajecki, Mississauga’s Commissioner of Planning and Building, the City presently has more than 700,000 inhabitants and 440,000 jobs but only 35,000 residents and 20,000 jobs are located downtown. Yet, the city’s nascent core has the capacity to build out to 70,000 people with the same number of employment opportunities, targets officials are gunning to reach with the City’s new Downtown 21 plan.

So when the Rogers family approached Urban Capital to help them develop a large tract of land they owned on the western edge of Downtown Mississauga, it was this context that drove the planning process: create a community that supports Mississauga’s evolution into a fully developed urban centre, with people living and playing in a truly urban

environment in order to complement the industry and businesses that are already there.

To get going, Urban Capital assembled a diverse team of consultants, including Cooper, Robertson and Partners from New York, one of North America’s leading urban design firms and the firm behind New York’s Battery Park City, and Rudy Wallman of Wallman Architects, the architectural firm behind Urban Capital’s Tableau project.

Based on the plan they developed, the Rogers family’s 15-acre site, tentatively called “Garden City Mississauga”, is slated to become a 4,500-unit multi-block, mixed-use development; a pedestrian-friendly west end for the rapidly intensifying downtown core.

Of course, Garden City Mississauga’s projected 12,000 residents and supporting cast of retail merchants will only be one part of the equation in fulfilling Mississauga’s big city aspirations. By all accounts, transit will be another. Awaiting further provincial funding announcements in 2013, Ed Sajecki has already undertaken the detailed design work for a major north-south light rail rapid transit line. The 23-km corridor with about 30 stations will connect

Mississauga’s waterfront to Downtown and points north, calling at four GO Transit interregional hubs along the way.

Given Garden City’s location at the western border of Downtown Mississauga, the master plan calls for signature residential buildings, like a 60-story point tower on the corner, defining a western gateway to Downtown and bookending its skyline with iconic architecture.

“We wanted to create one or two very important signature towers on Burnhamthorpe,” says Donald Clinton of Cooper Robertson. “If you are downtown and you look west and east, we’d like Garden City’s towers to be as important on the skyline in the west as the Absolute World towers are in the east. Really defining the edge of the downtown.”

The master plan outlines typical block configurations. The massing of the buildings are of four- to six-story podiums topped with slim high-rise condo towers set back from the podiums’ edges. This will simultaneously allow significant contributions to the skyline while the podiums will preserve a human scale for pedestrians.

The Garden City team took the sun’s trajectory into account to determine the



building heights, profiles and locations of the ten condominium towers they anticipate for the site, ranging between 30 and 60 stories each. They choreographed



them to maximize direct sunlight on the community's central green space, the tallest ones to the north and the shortest surrounding the park. Depending on a street's orientation, they chose the

podium heights with the aim of providing the latest afternoon sun possible to the sidewalks, an important consideration, particularly in the winter months.

Garden City also features small, walkable block sizes, narrow streets, wide sidewalks, and curbside parking which buffers pedestrians and calms traffic. A couple of angled streets discourage speeders from zipping through.

"We had streets that didn't really form a grid per se, they meandered a little bit," says John Anderton, Vice-President and Treasurer of Rogers private companies and the company representative most actively involved throughout the master planning process. "While the Urban Design Panel reacted positively, different city departments were less enamoured with it because it didn't conform to what they were used to," hinting at the involved to-and-fro process with the city.

The Garden City master plan enhances Downtown Mississauga's extensive bike path and trail system by joining two previously unconnected parts, the Mary Fix Greenway and Bud Cleary Park.

This alternative transportation network is meant to connect the Downtown's parks, squares and commons, and the Garden

City consulting team enhanced this by continuing the Mary Fix Greenway through two contiguous green spaces. One, a linear park, runs like a ribbon through the heart of the main retail strip extending the pedestrian realm on one side of the street.

"We embraced their network of open space and made a big deal out of the Mary Fix Creek alignment. They wanted the green space to tie in more strongly to Bud Cleary Park. We felt high densities would be more appropriate, and made Mary Fix Linear Park a much narrower open space," says Clinton. "What we've ended up with is an amalgamation of two ideas, something that's a big open space to the south but then something tighter and more urban which goes north towards Burnhamthorpe."

Will Garden City look like something Ebenezer Howard could imagine? Mississauga will never be the community Howard dreamed of, an idyllic 45,000 person town separated from its neighbours by rolling countryside. But by developing a dense, transit-oriented urban community, where people have close access to parks, shops, restaurants and their office, we can all do a little honour to what he was trying to achieve.

A DEFT DESIGN TEAM AND EXPERIENCED BUILDERS  
TRANSLATE URBAN CAPITAL'S GLASS TOWER SENSIBILITIES  
INTO A NEW TORONTO TOWNHOUSE TYPE



# HIGH RISE DESIGN GOES LOW

**W**ith Trinity Bellwoods Town+Homes, Urban Capital along with partners Shram Homes introduced a new typology to downtown Toronto's residential real estate market. This 45-unit housing development, designed by Richard Wengle Architects and Ceconi Simone Interior Design and made up of two rows of three-story townhouses, could equally be viewed as a pair of horizontal skyscrapers.

Just north of Dundas Street, lying back-to-back with 110 meters of frontage along Manning Avenue and Claremont Street, each row of townhouses is a statuesque composition, a massing of four residential volumes, each containing six dwellings and several different facades. A single palette of exterior colours and finishes provides a visual cohesion along the full length of the two street lines.

The variety and sequencing of the facades make the exterior envelope of the volumes patterned and multifaceted. Architect Richard Wengle borrowed this solution from good high-rise design. "Whereas simple towers use one repetitive element, the better projects tend to be more of a composition, more sculpted," he explains, revealing his inspiration for the grouped townhouses' facades of large glass window panes, grey-brick masonry, wood-veneer paneling and metal trim.

Buoyed by Urban Capital's high-rise experience and the custom in-fill housing know-how of Shram Homes, the Trinity Bellwoods design team reinterpreted and reinvented urban living for the low-rise townhouse context. It was a fruitful process. They discovered much transferable knowledge, resulting in a

complete rethink, Townhouse 2.0, of this medium-density housing type.

These two rows of clustered, high-rise-inspired townhouses were a welcomed departure from the everyday vocabulary of traditional townhouse developments.

"Up until recently the most typical planning scenario for townhouses was a very simple elevation repeated, maybe with an alternating brick colour," says Wengle. "But this wasn't the typical townhouse scenario and Urban Capital's high-rise background made for a good mix. They had an appreciation for the design of smaller units and work that was a little more linear, if you will. It was a perfect opportunity to try something different."

Launched in late 2010, Trinity Bellwoods was at the time a new concept. "It was really groundbreaking. It was one of the first consequential, contemporary, low-rise developments, bringing sophistication and modern

design to a large townhouse project in a neighborhood with great proximity to so much of downtown west."

Back then, the project's 45-dwelling scale was a distinguishing feature. There had been plenty of precedents of contemporary, new construction townhouse developments of two, four or eight dwellings, but nothing much larger. "We felt that the market had accepted contemporary design in high-rise residential buildings but no one had ventured into doing contemporary townhouses at a medium scale," says Elaine Ceconi, the project's interior designer.

On the opening weekend, Paul Johnston, the project's realtor, sold nearly 50 percent of the townhouses. "The brisk sales confirmed the considerable demand for newly-built, centrally-located, unequivocally-contemporary single-family residences," he remarks. Since then other properties have been brought to market that are





emulations or interpretations of the same concept.

Sold between \$800,000 and \$1.6 million, the value proposition of Urban Capital's townhouses was twofold. First, the townhouses were less expensive per square foot than new downtown high-rise condominiums. And second, they didn't require any further renovations, unlike the majority of downtown Toronto's aging housing stock, a sea of 80- to 120-year-old fixer-uppers with English gardens.

"By comparison to new high-rise or mid-rise condominiums they were less expensive. Also if you compare them to existing homes in the neighborhood and add to the purchase price of that home the kind of renovation that would be required to get it to the level of finish both mechanically and aesthetically, these were a really affordable option and that's something a lot of people grasped," Johnston explains.

The townhouses' state-of-the-art kitchens and bathrooms, both with custom millwork, were indeed ready for a modern family to move in to and begin to use. No protracted renovations, spiraling costs, nor arguments with contractors or live-in partners.

"Two of our buyers were actually in

the midst of doing a fixer-upper and were so frustrated by the experience that they abandoned ship, saying, 'Let's just buy something that's already done,'" Johnston says.

"Clearly these were homes for people who had really decided on the downtown lifestyle but were seeking a home that had sufficient space and was divided in a more traditional home way," Johnston adds.

Elaine Cecconi, who has collaborated with Urban Capital for the better part of two decades, was able to identify a broader trend and another source of strong interest for this high-rise-influenced townhouse project.

"What's happened is that a lot of first time buyers who bought ten or fifteen years ago are looking to either get married or have families. They now have better jobs and higher incomes," she says, "So they are looking for the same design sensibility that they've become accustomed to in their high-rise units. These townhouses are a nice transition from a condo to a private residence because they contain some of the more contemporary design elements that we introduced to our purchasers in our high-rise buildings."

"It's extremely challenging and demanding to ask someone who has come of age in a new building that's from a design perspective of our generation to then transition into a century-old home that's in disrepair," says Johnston, referring to the often first-time, one-bedroom condo purchaser from a decade ago who has grown up accustomed to the benefits and comforts of high-rise living, including contemporary interior design, new construction and sensibly contemplated floor plans.

Designing these sextets of narrow but tall townhouses didn't come without its own set of inherent challenges and peculiarities. "We applied the principles we first developed in high-rise to these larger living environments but they posed different challenges because their footprint tended to be narrower and longer so you're dealing with deep spaces," says Cecconi, "It's a different planning challenge."

Yet, some of these challenges also became unique opportunities that yielded positive outcomes in these relatively compact, single-family living spaces.

"Since the townhouses are fairly small we were able to put a lot of custom elements into them. It's almost like a





custom home has been designed for you though you haven't worked directly with the designer or architect," she explains. "A lot of what we've done is just based on what we know people need to live and work and have in a house. So there's a high degree of custom work though it's basically a production product."

"I consider this project a hybrid between custom, private residences and condominium living," she adds.

Rather than the interior designer and architect working in isolation, for Trinity Bellwoods Cecconi and Wengle collaborated from the earliest stages of the design process. They worked both from the outside in and the inside out.

"Like on our high-rise projects we worked really closely with the developer right from the beginning. We were literally brought on almost as soon as the architectural team was. At that point the project is still malleable like a piece of clay, and there was flexibility in terms of the windows and even structure. We could still manipulate those things before the building was solidified," Cecconi explains.

This collaborative process gave the master bathrooms more natural light. "We have a clerestory window over the vanity to give daylight and a vertical window to

the left for views outside. When there's an opposite townhouse just 30 feet away, the windows' locations become very important," Cecconi says, "So we worked together on the bathroom layout and the placement of the windows, it was a back-and-forth dialogue, an ongoing dance between interior design and architecture."

A successful upgrade was the staircase with a central riser encased behind a glass wall, which turned the stairs into a showpiece. Cecconi felt that it was important to have floor-to-ceiling glass. "The stair became an architectural sculpture and it also gave the sense of expanded space to the outside wall."

The self-contained back decks are the townhouses' principal outdoor areas, off of the family rooms. An extension of the interior, the designers intended them for al fresco entertaining, weather permitting.

"We consider the terrace a part or an extension of the home. It's really an outdoor room. We really feel the interior and exterior should work in harmony in terms of finishes, lighting and furniture, and really speak to one another," Cecconi offers.

At first glance, the new rows of high-rise-inspired Trinity Bellwoods

Town+Homes may seem outlandish compared to the rest of the neighbourhood. Despite this, Wengle did borrow from the local architectural vocabulary of the surrounding streets.

"The neighborhood has a lot of third stories but they're hidden in dormers. What we did for the streetscape, so that we wouldn't tower over everybody, we stepped back the third floor, which created balconies," the architect explains. Coincidentally, "Seen from above the townhouses actually almost replicate much of the block, the house and lot depths are very similar all the way down the street."

Wasn't it about time someone overhauled and rehabilitated the antiquated Victorian row house with contemporary design suited for modern city life?

Indeed it was. In 2008, according to the United Nations Population Fund, for the first time more people lived in urban settings than rural ones. This silent tipping point has ushered in the "Urban Millennium". As urbanization continues unabated, it will undoubtedly be an era where high-rise condo design influence will continue to spread.

# VERTICAL URBAN FACTORY

**What if factories could be reintegrated into today's urban centres, bringing manufacturing jobs closer to where people live, and manufactured products closer to their customers? Nina Rappaport asks this very question in her "Vertical Urban Factory" exhibition, sponsored by Urban Capital at Toronto's Design Exchange. For Urban Capital Magazine, she follows up with some answers.**

**H**ow can we provide spaces for urban manufacturing to encourage industries to take root in our cities? What is the factory of the future economically, architecturally and urbanistically? These are some of the questions that I address in my travelling exhibition, *Vertical Urban Factory*, which was first displayed in New York, then at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Detroit, and this past fall at Toronto's Design Exchange.

Historically, factories (those places of making, shaping and assembling things) were our cities and our cities were factories filled with multi-storied dense spaces for "making". Throughout architectural history, the factory has been a place of design innovation for engineers and architects. This once-new

building type provided a freedom to explore the spatial, structural, and organizational ramifications of machines and production, from vertical systems dependent on gravity flow and centralized power sources, to hermetically sealed horizontal sheds in suburban fields. The origins of the "vertical urban factory", while perhaps not environmentally clean or safe in today's standards, were very much so urbanistically and economically. Workers, owners, machinery all were in proximity. Factories were integrated into life, providing stable jobs and building an urban economy.

With the ease of containerized shipping and the digital supply chain, factories have been leaving North American and European cities in search of cheaper



photograph by Sonia Ramundi

TORONTO  
ET MFG. CO. LIMITED.



### VW FACTORY, DRESDEN

Henn Architects' "Transparent Factory" for VW represents the "consumption of production" where manufacturing becomes a public spectacle.



courtesy of Henn Architekten, photograph by H.E. Gesch

### AMERICAN APPAREL PLANT, LOS ANGELES

American Apparel reuses existing industrial buildings with a commitment to producing in LA, itself a part of its urban brand.



photograph by Yan Wang

### VALDOMINGOMEZ RECYCLING PLANT, MADRID

Abalos & Herreros designed two recycling facilities that unite a selection and processing complex, storage, workshops, exhibition area and offices..



photograph by Luis Asin



Vertical Urban Factory opened on September 12, 2012 at Toronto's Design Exchange, sponsored by Urban Capital. The exhibit features a timeline comparing industrial technology, social issues and factory design over the centuries, and takes an in depth look at over 30 factories, illustrated with over 200 photographs, diagrams, drawings, models and films.

land, production, and labour elsewhere. The new free trade zones in developing countries such as China, India, and Mexico, together with networked just-in-time production, have contributed to a global "flat" world and, by removing the process of "making" from our everyday life, changed the dynamic of our cities. As industry is redefined, cities and their entrepreneurs must find new strategies to maintain manufacturing sectors so that they can also inspire new inventive modes of production.

What might the future factory look like? In response to the urgent need for jobs and cleaner production, the "vertical urban factory" can be a model for innovation integrated into our cityscapes. New industries and niche production relating to the local consumer, such as furniture, fashion, printing, and food, can continue to expand and revitalize urban economies.

*Vertical Urban Factory* envisions a number of different scenarios for this near future. The first is the "transparent factory", representing what I call the "consumption of production". A factory could engage and educate the public about making by displaying its manufacturing processes through large

windows onto our city streets. Natural light would improve conditions for workers and those passing could see how things are made. An example of this already exists in the VW factory in Dresden, Germany.

Another direction for the future is the "cleaner and greener factories" seen, for example, at the recycling plant of Valdomingomez in Madrid. Manufacturing for sustainable industries such as plastic and paper recycling, electric cars, and eco-furniture, can be urban-based. Local production also reduces transit costs and air pollution. Collectively, greener manufacturing can result in an urban industrial symbiosis, where one factory's waste fuels another, and energy produced by a new building system can supply power for entire neighborhoods.

Finally, "flexible vertical urban factories" are often located in existing loft spaces that we are now seeing again in New York, Detroit, and Toronto, which are easily adaptable according to new machinery and economic needs. These are light industrial but also often high-tech workshops, neo-cottage industries, or shared hacker and maker spaces that can be located in new incubator

buildings. With open-source manufacturing software, CNC and 3D printers, designers can quickly make prototypes and develop a product in small batches. This could increase innovative, small-scale, just-in-time production for goods on demand.

With these smaller spaces manufacturing can occur everywhere. We do not need separate industrial zones – new clean manufacturing could be integrated into mixed used areas to encourage working and living in proximity with a mix of incomes and thus diversity.

If factories could be taller, denser, and diversified, and light industrial zoning allowed at higher densities, the "vertical urban factory" could be reinvented for future entrepreneurs in new flexible economies. A building type that was once inspiring in its architectural innovation needs to be reconsidered as significant for designs today with new materials and technologies. If industrialists and urban planners could reconsider the potential for building factories vertically, this, in turn, could reinforce the cycles of making, consuming, and recycling for sustainable and self-sufficient cities.

*Nina Rappaport*

# CONDO DEVELOPMENT 101

## How to build large buildings on small sites (in 10 easy steps)

As our urban centres become more and more dense, available development sites are getting smaller and smaller. So the art, and science, of putting big buildings on small sites is ever more important. For over 15 years Urban Capital has had intimate experience in building in very tight urban locations. In what follows, a little inside knowledge on how they've done it.



# REAL ESTATE

## The Canadian Condominium Market in 2012

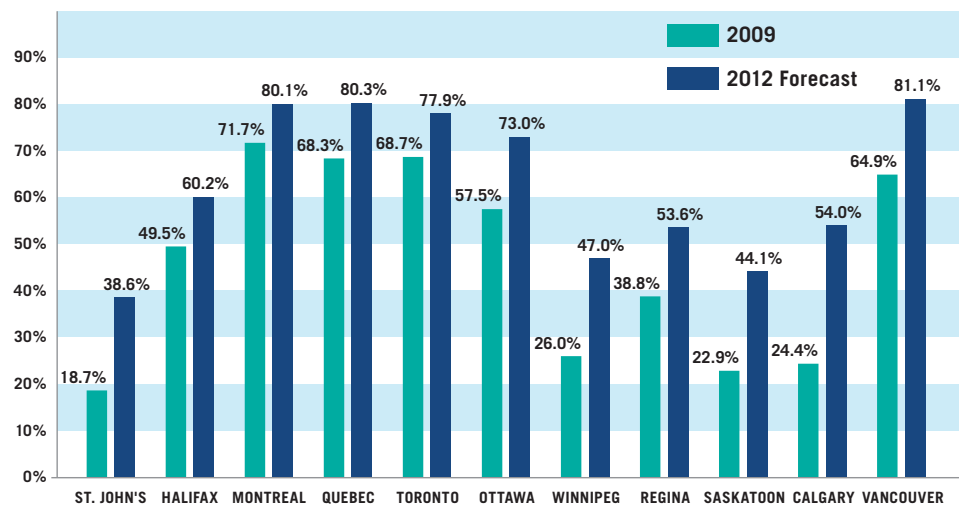
**Notwithstanding short term set-backs in some markets, population growth and other demographic factors will continue to fuel condominium markets across the country, says Jasmine Cracknell and Barry Lyon, two of Canada's top real estate observers.**

The multiple-dwelling unit phenomenon (apartments, townhouses and semi-detached homes) is gaining traction across the country from St. John's to Vancouver. While conditions vary in each of the major markets, all Canadian cities share core housing fundamentals which are starting to or have already shifted the form of housing from single-detached homes to multiple dwellings.

Immigration is the root of population growth and by extension, housing demand. While some markets will experience a slowdown in total population growth, of the eleven major centres surveyed, all are expected to post positive net migration gains in 2012 and 2013. Each of the centres will also experience employment growth in 2012, with the majority of job creation in full-time positions. Saskatoon, St. John's and Calgary will see the strongest growth, mainly from the energy, oil and gas and mining sectors, as well as capital investments. The importance of Canada's perceived economic and political stability on the world stage has also attracted international purchasers and investors to cities across the country.

Relative affordability has been a significant driving force behind condominium apartment demand. Nearly all the major markets have seen double-digit gains in single-detached pricing between 2009 and 2012. Eroding affordability in the single-family home sector has underpinned much of the push towards more affordable multiple housing. Historically low mortgage interest rates have also helped make home ownership more attainable.

**MULTIPLE DWELLINGS AS A % OF TOTAL HOUSING STARTS**  
Major Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas  
2009 and 2012 Forecast



While these market fundamentals are expected to remain stable, a number of trends and market dynamics will continue to drive high-density housing demand across the country:

- The growing need to reduce commuting times and enhance live/work relationships. In downtown Toronto, for instance, the large and growing new population of young, well-educated condominium owners and renters is continuing to stimulate demand for new office and retail space within walking distance or a short transit ride. This in turn is stimulating new office construction and the relocation of major employers from the suburbs to downtown, which in turn is creating demand for more downtown condominium supply.

- Aging populations and the appeal of a maintenance-free lifestyle that condominium housing offers.
- In more mature condominium housing markets, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa and Halifax, the increasing popularity of the urban lifestyle, offering a mix of universities and colleges, sports facilities, cultural venues, food and entertainment.
- Very tight market conditions in purpose-built rental apartments in many of the cities surveyed are drawing investors seeking to purchase condominium units to be rented.

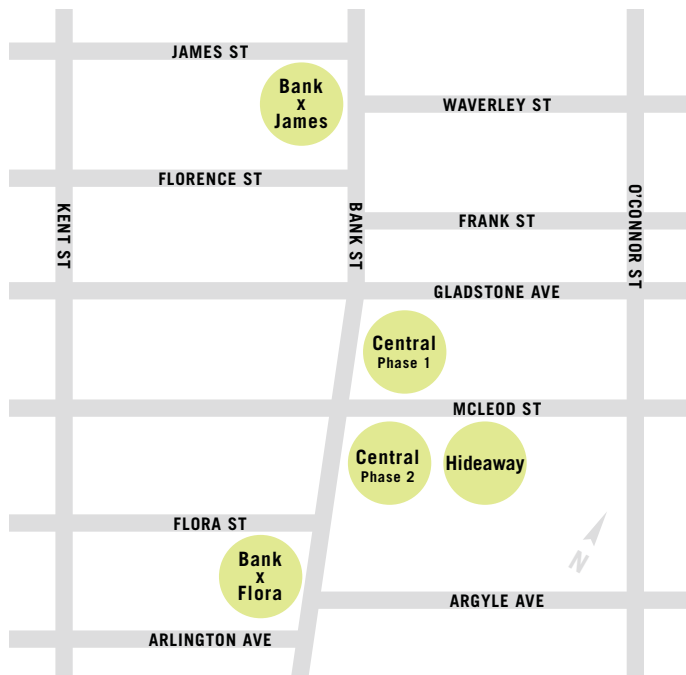
# ILLUSTRATION

## Rachael Ann Lindsay's Centretown

Rachael Ann Lindsay is a Toronto-based illustrator making a name for herself with her whimsical line drawings. For Urban Capital she created a tableau of Ottawa's Centretown district, replete with local haunts such as Barrymore's, Whalesbone, Ada's Diner and Thimble Cakes.

Urban Capital has a keen interest in the Centretown district, with Central Phase 1, Central Phase 2 and Hideaway anchoring its southern end, and future developments planned on sites at both Bank and Flora and Bank and James Streets, properties which Urban Capital acquired in 2012. In all, Urban Capital is bringing over 800 residential units to the Bank Street strip from Catherine to James Street, together with large and small retailers, including the first ever LCBO in a stand-alone condominium.

In addition to developing major infill buildings in the area, Urban Capital (together with Ottawa partner Taggart Group) has committed significant funds to the public sphere, spending over \$1.3 million to bury overhead utility wires on Bank Street, Gladstone Avenue and McLeod Street, and contributing \$200,000 to the capital campaign of the National Capital YMCA, a major local institution.







Bye-bye Market

CENTRE TOWN

CENTRAL

Hideaway

Eaton St

MUSEUM OF NATURE

GLABSTONE

LCBO

M'LEOD

BANK ST

Trinkets Cupcakery

Giant's

Sonnenset

OPEN

CONCH

# REAR VIEW

## The Little Sales Office that Could, RIP



**MONDRIAN**

Laurier Ave W  
Bank St  
Somerset St W

James St

Gladstone Ave

**CENTRAL  
PHASE 1  
Model Suite Added**

**CENTRAL  
PHASE 2**

**HIDEAWAY**

McLeod St

Argyle Ave

Bank St

Kent St

Catherine St

HWY 417

In December 2012, on the start of construction of Hideaway, Urban Capital finally brought the curtains down on its itinerant Ottawa sales pavilion, which began its life in November 2005 at the corner of Bank and Laurier as the Mondrian sales office, then moved to Bank and Gladstone in late 2006 for the launch of Central Phase 1, then moved a block south in early 2008 for the launch of Central Phase 2, and finally, in the fall of 2011, moved a couple of hundred metres east to the Hideaway site for the launch of that project.

We will miss you.

# OWN WITH 5% ONLY DOWN\*

PHASE 1  
NOW COMPLETED

PHASE 2  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION



## CENTRAL 2

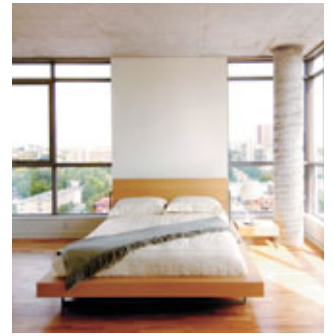
SALES OFFICE AT 455 BANK ST. UNIT #2 AT MCLEOD.  
MON-WED 12-6 PM | THURS 3-8 PM | SAT 12-5 PM | SUN 1-5 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US  
613.789.5475 [CENTRAL2.COM](http://CENTRAL2.COM)

\*NOTE, AN ADDITIONAL 5% DUE ON INTERIM OCCUPANCY



# HIGH DESIGN URBAN LIVING



## NOW SELLING



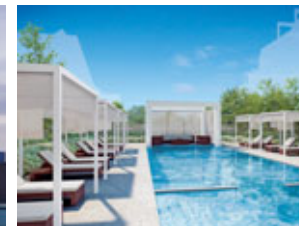
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