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West Queen West Sensibility Shapes Art Condos: A Tour, Part 1

March 27, 2013 6:15 pm | by Jack Landau | [6 Comments](#) ([/news/2013/03/west-queen-west-sensibility-shapes-art-condos-tour-part-1#disqus_thread](#))

The Queen West Triangle is formed by Queen Street on the north, Dovercourt Road on the east, and the rail corridor cutting from the southeast towards the Junction and beyond. It's a funky area - some would tell you formerly funky - and it has seen an explosive wave of redevelopment in recent years, as older railway-related industrial manufacturing and warehousing sites are quickly being supplanted by residential properties. First it was artists in illegal loft conversions, and then it was developers. There's been a concern for the loss of authentic community since the teardowns started, but not all of the new developments are running roughshod over the local ethos.



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Art Condos exterior, image by Jack Landau

One such project, [Triangle West Development](http://www.artcondos.ca/) (<http://www.artcondos.ca/>)'s [Art Condominiums](#)

<http://urbantoronto.ca/database/projects/art-condos>), has taken its inspiration from the neighbourhood's industrial and artistic past, both of which are well reflected in this truly unique development. Construction on the 11-storey, 148-unit building started in early 2011 and wrapped up earlier this year, with finishing touches still being applied. We started to pay attention when coloured tiles were hand inlaid on the building's precast exterior columns and beams, prompting our curiosity. To get a closer look, we were granted an in-depth tour of the project by Gary Silverberg, President of Triangle West Developments, as well as the building's designer, architect David W. Oleson of [Oleson Worland Architects \(http://www.olesonworlandarchitects.com/\)](http://www.olesonworlandarchitects.com/).



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Gary Silverberg (left), and David W. Oleson (right), image by Jack Landau

Silverberg and Oleson make for great tour guides. The two are obviously pleased as they see more and more of the finishing details in place, bringing the project closer to their vision. They are not boastful, but they take pride in the details, and as we toured around the building it became more and more obvious that every component has been considered here. The tour—heck, we've been back twice since; we like the place so much—would reveal something new around every corner that would either surprise or generally delight, leaving us asking ourselves how others might have missed so many tricks.

Stepping in through the front doors of the building, we find ourselves in the stark but warm lobby, gallery-like with polished concrete, track lighting and wooden ceiling finishes. The focal point here is the blank wall behind the concierge desk, illuminated by projected images of art. [Gary Michael Dault \(http://www.peakgallery.com/artists/GMD.html\)](http://www.peakgallery.com/artists/GMD.html), a renowned artist and professor, has compiled over 5,200 images and video clips consisting of contemporary and avant-garde art that runs continuously as a welcome to the building.



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Lobby at Art Condos, note the projected image above the concierge desk, image by Jack Landau

As well as being projected onto the lobby wall, this 'reel' plays on various screens throughout the building's hallways and amenity areas. What's playing on individual screens can be separately programmed, but it's all wired to keep residents entertained and informed. This embrace of the Queen West artistic sensibility distinguishes Art from the countless other residential developments rising in the near vicinity.



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Hallways in Art Condos are equipped with LCD monitors, displaying a slideshow of art, image by Jack Landau

As with many UrbanToronto tours, we started off by making our way to the uppermost residential floor - in this case the 11th - to get an idea of the views residents are seeing out their windows as they move in to their units. Despite only being 11 storeys high, quite low by central Toronto standards, the views from Art Condos shown below are stunning to say the least, and rather wildly so on this dramatically cloudy day.



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Panorama of eastern view from the top floor of Art, image by Jack Landau



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View of the downtown core from Art Condos, image by Jack Landau



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View of the Bloor-Yorkville skyline from Art Condos, image by Jack Landau



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View looking north from Art Condos, image by Jack Landau

Moving on, we descended a few floors to check out an unfurnished corner unit with spectacular south and east views. “Everywhere possible we have floor to ceiling windows, so that it’s a view everywhere, every side” said Mr. Silverberg, motioning towards the full wall of windows, “We have also provided blinds in every unit so that the building has consistent look from the outside.”



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Kitchen - east view, image by Jack Landau



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Wall of floor-to-ceiling windows, image by Jack Landau

Another interesting feature we noticed in the unit was a projector mount in the ceiling. Conduits for tv and web cables were run throughout the building's ceilings, a nice surprise for purchasers, and allow easy installation of a projector. This gives purchasers the option to use a wall for tv when they want it... and just have an uncluttered wall at other times. Due to the low-cost and high-resolution of projectors at the time construction began, they have become a recurring theme throughout the development, providing slideshows of art in common areas as well as home entertainment within the units themselves. Of course, anyone still wanting to hang or stand a television can do that too!



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Projector mount cover (center) in the ceiling of the suite, image by Jack Landau

Several energy efficient features have been included in the project including an expansive green roof, designed to combat the urban heat island effect known all too well in Toronto. Art Condos was also the first development in Toronto to offer charging stations for electric vehicles in its garage. In fact, they even had an innovative sales program which involved selling an electric car and smaller parking spot for the same price as one could buy a just a normal size parking spot.

One feature of Art Condos still in development are the plans to widen the sidewalk along the building's Sudbury Street frontage and add street furniture for lounging and cafe seating, improving the local streetscape and public realm.




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Improved public realm along Sudbury St. with widened sidewalks, image courtesy of Oleson Worland Architects

We've got way more to show you at Art Condos: consider this as just the appetizer! We will return tomorrow with [Part 2](http://urbantoronto.ca/news/2013/03/its-art-its-condo-touring-art-condos-queen-west-triangle-part-2) (<http://urbantoronto.ca/news/2013/03/its-art-its-condo-touring-art-condos-queen-west-triangle-part-2>) of our extensive tour of the project, which looks behind that rendered glass frontage above, and gets more into the thoughtful street realm.

In the meantime, you can visit the associated dataBase page, linked below, for additional information and renderings. Want to get involved in the discussion? Check out the related forum thread, [here](http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/10826-Art-(40-Dover-court-Sudbury-Triangle-West-11s-Oleson-Worland-Hariri-Pontarini)) ([http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/10826-Art-\(40-Dover-court-Sudbury-Triangle-West-11s-Oleson-Worland-Hariri-Pontarini\)](http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/10826-Art-(40-Dover-court-Sudbury-Triangle-West-11s-Oleson-Worland-Hariri-Pontarini))), or voice your opinion in the comments section below.

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44 Dovercourt Rd, Toronto | [Triangle West Development](#)
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- [Excavation Underway At Triangle West Developments' Art Condos](#) (/news/2011/03/excavation-underway-triangle-west-developments-art-condos)
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- [Art Crawl Part 3: Condos Worthy of West Queen West](#) (/news/2013/04/art-crawl-part-3-condos-worthy-west-queen-west)
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realsales · a month ago

Wow, looks like a great place for Artists to live and work! it's really going to add to the local artscene when all those artists move into these great condos!

3 ^ | v Reply

Xray_Crystal_Junkie · a month ago

Your writing is getting quite good sMT. Nice article.

^ | v Reply

Pedantor · a month ago

Some great panoramas!

^ | v Reply

milanista1 · a month ago

I've been inside a few units at this building and the interior is quite good overall. I hope they get some decent retail for the ground floor, the for lease signs have been up for quite some time now. My only major problem with this building is the light coloured podium. The renderings suggested something much darker, with a brick pattern. From what a sales person told me quite some time ago, it was supposed to pay homage to the building they demolished. I like the little colourful accents within the concrete (or whatever it is) portion of the podium, I just think it would have made for a better contrast with darker materials.

^ | v Reply

Brandon G. Donnelly · a month ago

This one went up fast.

^ | v Reply

Hamiltonian · a month ago

Wow! This is such a decent place!

^ | v Reply

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