

On the map: Warehouse recreation caters to the live-work crowd

The Corktown building takes its design inspiration from Toronto's heritage artist spaces

Jenny Febraro, Special to National Post

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Available space at 167 Parliament will include commercial units and live/work lofts. PHOTO BY PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE DOWNING STREET GROUP AND THE SHER CORPORATION

It's loft-inspired living, but without the old windows. In partnership with Downing Street Group, The Sher Corporation has developed a new mixed-use building that takes its design inspiration from Toronto warehouses.

"Initially, we were approached by Downing to see if we could contribute to the residential component of the property," says Shakeel Walji, owner of The Sher Corporation. "But before committing we wanted to really increase the number of work/live units. Once the city agreed to permit us to go as high as 29 units, we decided to join." Including the exclusively commercial spaces and rooftop event area, the development contains 65 units total.

Located in Corktown at 187 Parliament St., the building is uniquely divided. There will be 3,000 square feet of retail on the main level; floors two to five are dedicated commercial lofts; while floors six to 10 are warehouse lofts. "With 20 in total, these are envisioned as live/work lofts for those who might have a start-up business," says Walji. "That said, you could also simply live there or simply work there – but we are catering to a demographic that seeks space to do both." The average size of a live/work loft in the building is 1,674 square feet for \$1.969 million, while the smallest unit still sits large, at 1,674 square feet for \$1.789 million.

Katie Kuzan, senior associate at Kohn Partnership Architects, says the real gem of the development is the 11th floor indoor/outdoor event area. "It's a glass-enclosed space for anyone in the building to use and it has remarkable views of the city," says Kuzan. "It would be ideal for a launch or a party of any sort." That said, it's also available for private sale. For a cool \$5 million, someone could turn those 6,300 square feet into a home or office space, or both.

"This is the modern crown of the building," says Kuzan. "It's a corner glass pavillion that faces the downtown core and is very dramatic." Retractable walls allow for the glassed area to be completely opened up to the outdoor terrace.

Architecturally, Kuzan says, the structure's loft-inspired design – which she calls "industrial chic" – recalls heritage artist spaces. "The developers came to the table inspired by artist lofts from the '60s and '70s in Toronto," she says. "It was this period of time where artists would move into derelict factories or warehouse buildings and share spaces with each other. That's the mandate we started with."

The aesthetic is that of exposed concrete and duct work, barn doors, which we brought in from Newfoundland, and a lot of masonry elements that you might expect to see," says Kuzan. "Rather than converting an actual warehouse into a loft, we simply recreated it," she says.

The units include Juliette balconies, not normally seen in a loft structure, and windows that retract with the touch of a button; the building at large contains three high-speed elevators, underground parking, a modern VRF heating and cooling system, and a digital infrastructure that provides high-speed internet throughout.

She explains that another big advantage to building new was the window construction, allowing for floor-to-ceiling windows to maximize views. "Then there's obvious things we would want to include that older lofts might not have," laughs Kuzan. "Like insulation, for example."



On the 11th floor, a glass-enclosed indoor/outdoor event space with views of the city is available for any of the building's occupants to use. PHOTO BY PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DOWNING STREET GROUP AND THE SHER CORPORATION

Amenities include a 4th floor gym and an outdoor barbecue area, a dog-washing area, bike storage and lounges. For the commercial units, there are medium to large spaces for meetings and presentations, a library regularly stocked with newspapers, books and magazines, a dedicated print shop for printing, copying and scanning, a fresh produce market, and unlimited coffee and fruit water available round the clock. There's also a hoteling suite furnished for out-of-town guests to stay in.

In the kitchen and bathrooms in the live/work spaces, concrete and brick contrast with warm woods. The kitchen and bathroom cabinetry is Italian-made by Trevisana Kitchens + Interiors.

"We kept a continuity of finishes in the kitchen and bathroom so as not to disrupt the design vision," she says. With 10-foot ceilings and huge windows, the open-concept spaces are also filled with natural light. "But every unit is customizable," says Kuzan. "You could easily switch out a stud wall to an interior glass wall to blend work spaces and allow even more light in."

Live/work units starting at \$1.789 million for 1,674 square feet. For more information, visit www.downingstreet.com/commercial/187-parliament.